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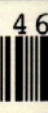
- Online auctions: Where to find the best bargains
- Get interactive! Start your own Internet chatroom
- Canvas 7: Quick & simple Web site creation on p78

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- Budget PCs on test: UK's best value PCs unveiled
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46

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Thomas Watson

TECHNICAL EDITOR



Our tartan-clad technical expert loves nothing better than tinkering with the latest gizmos, gadgets and software. He tells you in no-nonsense terms what's worth buying and what ain't

Robin Lewis

FEATURES EDITOR



Tim Henman lookalike Robin is an ace at serving up great features – all aimed at helping you get more from your Net connection and saving you money in the process

James Seabright

WEB SITE DESIGN SPECIALIST



Web guru and university undergraduate, James offers readers essential advice on how to create great looking Web pages and graphics with the minimum of fuss

HOME PAGE

Want value? You got it!

WELCOME TO OCTOBER'S value-packed *Practical Internet*. We've put together another fantastic issue for you this month – there's £140 worth of fully-working programs on the CD-ROM, a free 64-page book explaining how to create eye-catching 3D Web graphics using the software, and an amazing air travel offer that lets you fly to Europe and back for less than a tenner!

We also show you how to find bargains at online auctions, cut your phone bill by calling over the Net, and earn big bucks buying and selling domain names. And since searching the Net is often a time-consuming struggle, we've put the Internet's ten leading search engines head-to-head to find out which delivers the fastest, most accurate results.

In light of the big news about AltaVista's decision not to launch its freephone ISP (see page 10), we also have the lowdown on what the story means for you and which companies are still offering 0800 access. Enjoy!

Mark Newman,
Editor

mnewman@paragon.co.uk



Practical internet

THE MAG WITH A MISSION

"We're here to explain as clearly as possible how you can use the Internet to save yourself time, money and hassle"

FEATURES



Our in-depth features cover all the hottest topics – giving you advice on where to go on the Web and how to get the most from your Net connection

TUTORIALS



Find out how to use the Web smarter and faster. Our Net Workshop section gives you simple-to-follow, step-by-step guides, all written in plain English

ADVICE



Let our experts help you. Web Watchdog (p29) solves consumer problems, Q&A (p87) offers technical help and Design Doctor (p91) answers Web design issues

On sale 21 September — 18 October

CONTENTS ISSUE 46

Regulars

112 on the CD



Full products

Cool 3D 2.0 Fully working, 7.62Mb
SmartSaver 2.0 Fully working, 2.20Mb
Bullseye 2 Fully working, 8.09Mb

Browsing

Eudora Pro 4.3.0 Freeware, 5.71Mb
Free Agent Freeware, 1.05Mb
Goody Freeware, 1.22Mb
GoZilla Shareware, 1.69Mb
ICQ Freeware, 6.14Mb
Internet Explorer 5.5 Freeware, 38.6Mb
IES Accessories Freeware, 136Kb
Juf Search Freeware, 844Kb
Netscape Navigator 4.74 Freeware, 20Mb
Netscape Navigator 6 Installer Freeware, 209Kb
Opera 3 30-day trial, 1.27Mb
Outlook Express 5 Freeware, part of IES package
RealPlayer 8 Freeware, 3.1Mb
Shockwave/Flash Freeware, 3.11Mb
Sonique 1.51 Freeware, 1.92Mb
Stay Live 2000 Freeware, 96kb
WinZip 8 Freeware, 1.2Mb

ISPs

Madasafish Free Net access

Internet Auctions

Auction Manager Pro Freeware, 5.14Mb
Auction Assistant Classic 30-day trial, 9.69Mb
Auction Central 3Freeware, 1.10Mb
Auction Companion Freeware, 5.25Mb

Software Reviews

AtomNet Shareware, 668Kb
Internet Explorer 5.5 Freeware, 48.8Mb
Lynx Freeware, 740Kb
Netscape Navigator 6 Installer Freeware, 224Kb
Opera 4.02 30-day trial, 1.81Mb

Net Workshop

Anily Demo, 2.9Mb
Canvas 7.0 Demo, 37Mb
FileMaker Pro 5.0 Demo, 8.93Mb
MSN Messenger 3.0 Freeware, 672Kb
PowerNet 2000 Freeware, 608Mb

Online Searching

Data Grabber Freeware, 1Mb
FTP Wolf Freeware, 938Kb
Personal Search Agent Freeware, 844Kb
Search It Freeware, 34Kb
Search Rocket Freeware, 1.2Mb

Site Building

Adobe PageMill 30-day trial, 13Mb
Active Shop 30-day trial, 350Kb
CoffeeCup FTP Freeware, 736Kb
CoffeeCup WebCam 21-day trial, 3Mb
Cute FTP 4 30-day trial, 1.34Mb
CutePage DHTML Menu 30-day trial, 1.61Mb
Easy Applet Builder Shareware, 1.65Mb
FinePrint Web Freeware, 1.24Mb
GateKeeper 3.2 Freeware, 205Kb
GIF Construction Set Shareware, 3.89Mb
GNet Submission Freeware, 3.2Mb
HotDog Professional 6.2 30-day trial, 10.6Mb
Magic Buttons Freeware, 631Kb
Pop-Up Freeware, 661Kb
ThumbPrint Pro Shareware, 2.80Mb

For information on Mac programs featured on the disc, see page 115

Features in this issue:



Searching showdown!

32 The Web can quickly become a source of great aggravation if you can't find what you're looking for. We test ten search engines to see which one will find you what you want



BID FOR BARGAINS

38 Auction sites aren't all offering rare scribbles by Van Gough – you can pick up, and sell, almost anything you can think of. We take a look at two of the biggest players – QXL and ebay – and tell you how to use the sites to pick up some bargains



Cut your phone bill

48 Until freephone Net access establishes itself, it's easy to moan about paying to connect to the Net. By using special software, you can use your modem to phone other people, ensuring local rates for your calls and hopefully a lower phone bill!



Make your site unforgettable

64 There's no point in making a Web site if visitors don't find it appealing. One way to make sure people keep coming back to your site is to add interaction. We show you how to get your visitors involved

In the news this issue

10 infonation

Keep yourself up-to-date with what's happening on the World Wide Web. Here's the news...

- 10 Top stories
- 12 Sludge Report
- 14 Net Watch
- 14 Vox Pop
- 16 Net Shopping
- 18 Web Builder
- 20 Site In Focus
- 22 Hardwired
- 24 Net Profile
- 26 Web Diary

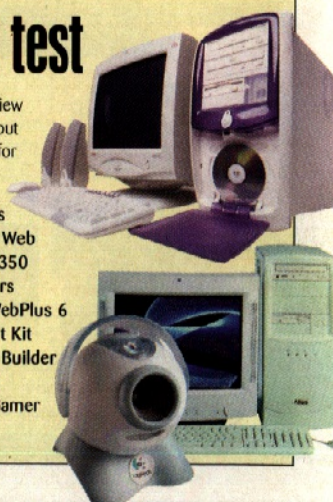


Reviewed in this issue

94 on test

Consult our review section to find out the equipment for Net users

- 94 Budget PCs
- 98 QuickCam Web
- 100 GSmart 350
- 103 Browsers
- 106 Serif WebPlus 6
- 107 Student Kit
- 107 Traffic Builder
- 108 Books
- 111 Net Gamer



Tutorials in this issue

69 Net Workshop

Our Net Workshop tutorials will ensure you get the best out of the Internet

BEGINNER TUTORIAL

If you're new to the Net, our beginner tutorials will show you the way

MSN Messenger 3.0 70

Enter the pleasing world of instant messaging with this latest version of MSN Messenger. Basically, it allows you to send messages to your pals in real-time, with none of the delay that you usually get with an email message

INTERMEDIATE TUTORIAL

These intermediate tutorials are ideal for the more experienced

PowerNet 2000 72

Simultaneously browse as many sites as you want using the tab system in PowerNet 2000

Online Favourites 73

Set up an Online Favourites account to store your Favorites and access them from any PC

ADVANCED TUTORIAL

Web pros can discover how to master the Net in our advanced section

FileMaker Pro 5 76

Make sure that you keep your Web site data in order by publishing databases online with FileMaker Pro 5. This program is really handy if you have a large site that requires lots of upkeep as you can easily update your content

HOME IMPROVEMENT

How to make your Web site even better than the rest

Canvas 7 78

You can easily set up a snazzy graphical home page using Canvas 7

YourCGI 80

Add some interaction to your site with the YourCGI service

Anfy 81

Add Java special effect applets to your site using the Anfy package from the cover CD

Intelligent fill-in forms 82

Use JavaScript to verify that your site's fill-in forms have been correctly completed

Advice in this issue

Q&A 87

Clive Parker and James Seabright preside over our Internet helpdesk

Web page Q&A 91

All your home page hassles are sorted by our resident HTML expert



Design doctor 91

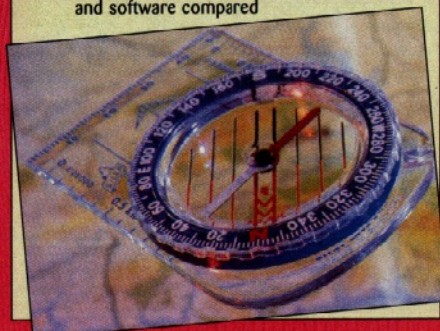
Advice on how to become a design deity of Web pages with our Net guru James Seabright

GET FLIGHTS FOR JUST £9! TURN TO PAGE 56

Full ISP listings

120 the guide

- 120 ISP Directory: Over 350 ISPs compared
- 128 Buyer's guide: The very best Net hardware and software compared



Regulars

Backchat 28

Find out what other readers think about the Net on our letters page, and see which companies have been up to no good with our Web Watchdog service

Ryan Air promotion 56

We've teamed up with Ryan Air to offer your some great deals on flights to Ireland and Europe

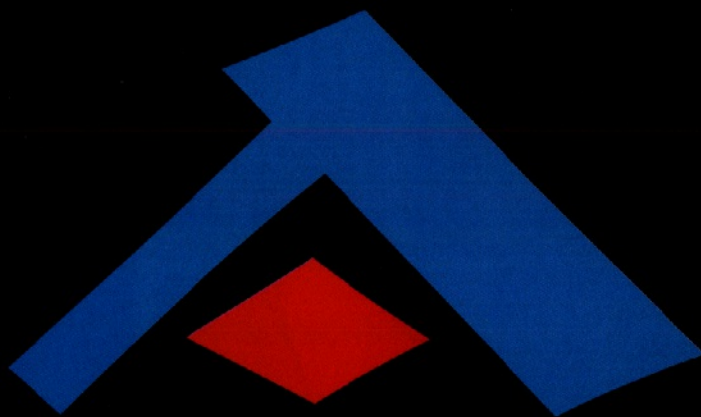
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ITN Online Editor, Fergus Shepard, continues to bring us his views on the Internet in his regular column. This month, he looks at Net Addiction





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info nation

THE COMPLETE INSIGHT INTO ALL THINGS INTERNET



Freephone Net chaos

AltaVista 'misled' its customers over unmetered access

ALTAVISTA UK has admitted that it never started its much-hyped unmetered access ISP after all – despite widespread reports to the contrary.

Andy Mitchell, the now-ex MD of AltaVista UK and Ireland, said in a statement that he “confused and misled” both his customers and his US bosses. AltaVista announced in March that it would be creating an unmetered access scheme, and was among the first companies to do so.

Coming just weeks after the high profile failures of unmetered services from CallNet 0800 and LineOne plus complaints against

NTL World and RedHotAnt, the AltaVista announcement deals a blow to the immediate future of 0800 access in the UK.

In a letter to customers, Mitchell wrote: “Like other organisations that have bailed out before us, we see no way at this time to provide a competitive product. The UK is more dependent than ever on OFTEL to level the playing field.”

BT hit back, releasing a statement saying AltaVista had tried to “wriggle out of its ill-conceived marketing hype.” Its director of regulatory affairs, Ian Morfett, said: “BT has delivered working unmetered access

for BT Internet and other leading ISPs. The cable companies have delivered offers restricted to their own ISPs. AltaVista has delivered nothing.”

OFTEL criticises AltaVista

The telecommunications industry watchdog OFTEL has backed BT over the issue, saying that AltaVista announced its plans before wholesale deals had been put together.

Criticising AltaVista, the watchdog's Director-General, Dave Edmonds, said: “I assumed that, as

alta vista:

a reputable company, they had a proper business plan.”

He added: “It is important that the industry provides consumers with a choice of products and tariffs to meet their needs.

“OfTel wants to see competition in unmetered Internet access develop. On 26 May I issued a Direction requiring BT to provide an unmetered wholesale product [Friaco] to other operators. This allows other operators and ISPs to have access to BT's local network on a wholesale basis to offer unmetered Internet access.

“I am confident that this provides a sound basis to promote competition in unmetered Internet access and expect to see more companies providing unmetered Internet access packages in the coming months.”

Competitive rates

But the Internet Service Providers Association (ISPA) claims that Friaco does not deliver effective competition. ISPA Council member Laurence Blackall said: “Mr Edmonds is sadly misinformed if he believes that BT's delayed and diluted unmetered plans will allow full and fair competition in the UK Internet access market.

“We need OfTel to publish the findings of its technical committee as a matter of great urgency. We would also urge Mr Edmonds to look very carefully at the reality of BT's activities in the field before making any further judgements about their willingness to allow true competition in this area.”

ACCESS & DENIED: WHO'S UP AND DOWN IN THE NET RACE

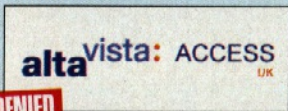
British Telecom



ACCESS

BT's SurfTime package seems to have benefited from the failure of some freephone ISPs and the telco now has control of a large percentage of the lines – which ISPs will have to use to offer services. There remains an element of metered charges passed on to ISPs – and consumers – despite Friaco, which only covers telephone lines as far as local exchanges.

AltaVista



DENIED

It announced its flat-rate Internet access service in March this year, pre-empting everyone. AltaVista then shot itself in the foot by, er, not actually creating a flat-rate Internet access service. The head of UK MD Andy Mitchell has subsequently rolled. Its CEO went on-air in the States and declared the UK service had thousands of subscribers, when in fact there were none.

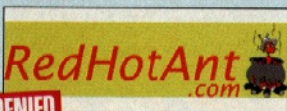
World Online



ACCESS

The Dutch-owned ISP World Online has been extremely successful at using narrowband technology, though in truth it is simply biding its time before rolling out its ADSL service. Potentially a huge player, WOL has already taken over ISPs like screaming.net and StrayDuck. It now has 2.2 million customers worldwide, of which 1.5 million are located in the UK.

RedHotAnt



DENIED

RedHotAnt has not been a happy camper of late. After threatening to ‘catch up with and terminate’ users who were using its service for too long, the ISP met the worm that turned. Now its customers are threatening legal action, accusing RedHotAnt of being unable to sort out its technical problems – although many are now saying the service has improved.

Freeserve



ACCESS

The only major ISP offering SurfTime, Freeserve's commitment to BT, appears to have paid off. Ten pounds a month will see you get unmetered access, though you have to spend £10 or more a month on voice calls via Energis, and you have to have a BT phone line. It's a good deal, knocking a pound off SurfTime and is only £6 for weekend and evening surfers.

Consumers



DENIED

Consumers are the ones really missing out. Subscribers to the services report that unmetered access is often slow and difficult to access. Also, those who use the services get kicked off every few hours due to the ISPs introducing cut-off times to minimise use. Despite the fact that the US has had it for years, the quality of the services is still very hit and miss at the moment.

TRAVEL 'SCAM' DENIED

ONLINE HOLIDAY FIRMS HIT BACK OVER 'BAIT AND TRAP' PRESS ALLEGATIONS

TRAVEL WEB SITES have expressed their anger at "erroneous and hurtful" newspaper reporting over alleged inquiries into their selling tactics.

The *Daily Telegraph* and *The Daily Express* ran stories about the Trading Standards Institute investigating dot com travel agents over "bait and

trap" techniques. Several sites had supposedly advertised offers and deals that were not available. The companies named were lastminute.com, bargainholidays.com and thomascook.co.uk.

Bruce Treloar, the Institute's spokesman on package travel regulations, said: "A Trading Standards Authority has informed me that there will be

an investigation into an online company following a complaint about pricing. However, the companies named in the original articles are not being targeted by

the Institute."

A spokesperson for Lastminute.com added: "We are very unhappy with the way that we've been portrayed. There's no investigation into Lastminute.com and there never has been."

Paul Donohue, producer of bargainholidays.com, called the reports "erroneous and hurtful". He added that the site's owner, Emap Online, is considering whether to take further action.

Research from The Consumers' Association was used as the basis of the newspaper reports. It was highly critical of travel firms generally – but concluded that Web sites actually performed slightly better than high-street travel agents, both in reliability and price.



BIGGEST BROTHER EVER: WEBCASTS WERE A HUGE HIT

CHANNEL 4'S RECENT TV-Internet crossover Big Brother has been confirmed as the most successful Webcast in history. According to figures released by Intel, the site reached upwards of 10 million hits a day.

However, the technology ran into problems during a crucial stage of the 12-week show. The Webcams went down when one of the characters, 'Nasty' Nick Bateman, was discovered breaking the rules of the show.

The problems sparked criticisms that TV executives had over-ruled the Web site managers and taken the cameras offline to boost ratings.

A C4 spokesperson denied the allegations, saying: "The incident occurred during a heated debate between the housemates, and there was the potential



for a violent incident. The night production team decided to turn the cameras off. In hindsight it was probably the wrong decision."

Big Brother has reportedly cost UK businesses around £1.4m a week in lost productivity from employees accessing the site.

Can't stop the music!

NAPSTER ATTACKS PENDING COPYRIGHT BATTLE

THE MUSIC-SWAP SITE Napster (www.napster.com) has appealed to the courts once again to overturn an injunction concerning its right to remain in operation.



Napster received a temporary reprieve from the ban to continue operating until the trial begins and now wants it lifted altogether. This is pending its copyright infringement trial against the Recording Industry Association of America.

Elsewhere, MP3.com has settled out of court in its case against Sony Music. MP3.com, which will pay Sony around \$20 million in damages, has agreed to pay a fee each time a Sony CD is registered by a user, and another fee every time a user downloads a Sony song.



news in brief

SHORT, SNAPPY AND TO-THE-POINT NET NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Get your family holiday snaps processed for free at Fotango (www.fotango.com). It's the first site to let people send in their 35mm film for free processing. The digital photos are then put online at a secure Web site within 24 hours – letting you share your photos with friends and family. Fotango will send them an email with a link to your photos.



AOL has teamed up with two of the UK's top newspaper hacks to launch The Agenda, an online news interview channel. Julia Hartley-Brewer, political correspondent for *The Guardian*, and tabloid veteran David Paul of the *Daily Star* are conducting hard-hitting high profile interviews with MPs,



celebrities and public figures behind the nation's headlines. Log on every Tuesday at 8pm and go to AOL Live or enter keyword 'agenda'.

The Ministry of Sound has announced a deal with beenz.com to allow clubbers to buy what they like at the nightclub's Web site (www.ministryofsound.com) using Beenz. Beenz is already in the music market with companies like MTV, MP3.com and clickmusic.co.uk, but this is its first foray into the dance arena.



Another computer virus hidden in an email about a Pokemon character is spreading across the world. The Pikachu virus has popped up in the US and comes in the form of a cartoon targeted at children. Once on your hard drive, Pikachu destroys files in the Windows and System directories. Some victims have said their Microsoft operating systems have had to be reinstalled from scratch.



Anglers can now buy fishing licences online at www.fishinglicence.co.uk. The site has been set up to help the UK's one million angling enthusiasts who apply for the license each year. Set up by the media company empower, it also features a link to Fishing.co.uk, the UK's most popular Internet fishing site.



news in brief

A BRIEF LOOK AT SOME OF THE OTHER NET STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Music fans can now receive up-to-date news and gossip on their favourite artists direct to their mobile, thanks to a new service launched by Sony Music eMedia. Tony Martin, the Director of eMedia at Sony Music, said: "We are delighted to be leading our field in offering this technology and very excited about the possibilities it offers." Read our interview with eMedia Director Tony Martin on page 24.

Rugby star Jonathan Davies has joined betting service Firststake (www.firststake.com) as host of its rugby section. The former Wales and Great Britain international will give expert analysis, tips and advice on teams and players.

The importance of Web marketing is often misunderstood and undervalued. Many sites don't make money because they don't get

enough visitors. PNL Internet (www.pnlinternet.net) is offering a range of low cost services to help sites get noticed.

Scientists have unveiled a sentry robot capable of shooting to kill via the Net, reminiscent of the film *Robocop*. The robot can be programmed to fire a pistol on-sight or on receipt of a password delivered via the Internet. It was unveiled at an exhibition in Bangkok hosted by the Thailand Research Fund.

We've had Sonic the Hedgehog and Donkey Kong. Now, Greenpeace (www.greenpeace.org) has created an online game about a group of polar bears armed only with snowballs fighting off BP oil rigs. Its launch comes as BP begins drilling in the Arctic Circle, which Greenpeace believes will destroy much of the habitat of the polar bear.

GREENPEACE.ORG

Online fraud fight stepped up

THE WORLD'S TWO biggest credit card companies are linking up to introduce new online fraud-busting initiatives to try and bolster confidence in Internet shopping.

Visa and Mastercard want card holders to submit more information when making purchases online. The two are reportedly planning to put a

three-digit number on the back of new cards issued over the next year.

This number would then be required when paying for goods in any way other than in person. Confirmation of a home address would also be required under the plans.

Credit card capers

The news comes in the wake of fresh figures from the Association for Payment Clearing which show credit card fraud amounted to £190 million during the last year. Some industry experts say that as many as 10 per cent of online credit card transactions are fraudulent.

The figures come after three men were arrested by the National Crime Squad for the theft of hundreds of thousands of pounds from Egg (www.egg.com).

It is alleged they filed a set of fraudulent applications for loans and bank accounts. Egg says security remained tight and no money had been taken from customer accounts.

Meanwhile, the Halifax (www.halifax.co.uk) has announced it will give away free anti-virus software to its online banking customers and also pledged to cover any online fraud in an attempt to bolster confidence in Internet banking.

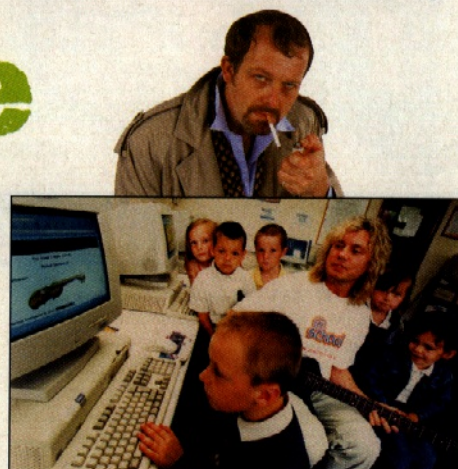


THE Sludge REPORT

SALACIOUS SATIRE FROM THE SUPERHIGHWAY

There have been some rather scathing comments in a certain tabloid newspaper recently about the ladies of Scunthorpe being...er, a bit rough. Now, local radio station Viking FM has started a Scunny Honey 2000 campaign on its Web site to restore dignity to the women of the town. Unfortunately, the cream of Scunny's Honeys - which you can view at www.vikingfm.co.uk/honey.htm - can best be described as... well, see for yourself.

There's more embarrassment for the departing Clinton administration as senior White House officials were suspended following the discovery of cyber-porn. The staff - some male, some female - have not been named amid fears of possible suicides. They were caught downloading 'animal and teen porn' in the White House. A senior spokesperson for the administration said: "It's all very embarrassing." Well, quite.



Now on to this month's PR Pic Of The Month (above). It's for a good cause, so we felt we had to show you this picture of the wonderful Rick Savage. The guitarist for rock dinosaurs Def Leppard is seen here showing his sensitive side to a bunch of schoolchildren. It deserves a caption, but we don't want to get sued.

stat attack

GO TO ANY TOWN IN THE UK AND YOU'LL FIND A BOOKIES. BUT HOW GOOD ARE WE ALL AT MAKING BETS? WE LOOK AT WHO MAKES THE PROFIT

PROFIT MADE FROM ONLINE FOOTBALL GAMBLING



IT'S A FACT!

Jersey punters are the least shrewd when it comes to online football gambling; their gamblers lost over half the bets they made. And in case you thought Scots were canny investors, Perth and Motherwell are two of the worst gambling towns.

Source: Totalbet.com (www.totalbet.com).



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FREE UK

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Net WATCH



Net censorship will never prevent terrorism, argues Chris Ellison

OFFLINE VALUES, MORALS and laws change year to year and country to country. On the Net, technology ensures that speech is immune from the petty restrictions of Nation states – or so it once seemed. This year, two French anti-racist groups filed proceedings against the US-based Yahoo! for hosting online auctions selling neo-Nazi objects. French laws prohibit selling or displaying anything that incites racism.

The judge, Jean-Jacques Gomez, ruled that the Web portal had offended France's "collective memory" and ordered Yahoo! to block French users from the sites selling the paraphernalia. In the US the site is protected by First Amendment free speech laws, and begs the question, who is going to police the Net: US cops or French gendarmes?

It is certainly not desirable that the Internet be ruled by the lowest legal common denominator. The practical business of running a Web site is difficult enough without having to take account of the laws of every country on Earth. Can it really be feasible that ISPs should ensure their sites comply with the laws from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe?

If the French judge rules in the favour of the anti-racist groups, then the verdict runs the risk of forcing ISPs to censor themselves. That is bad enough. To do so, they may consider that the only way of avoiding liability is to make their content as banal and inoffensive as possible. While the Internet began its life as a medium without national boundaries and without law, it may end up being prone to more to the most restrictive censorship laws in the world.

Internet Freedom can be contacted on campaign@netfreedom.org. The campaign's Web site is at www.netfreedom.org

Government informers

A CABINET OFFICE pilot scheme is to use Internet companies to inform the government of any changes in the postal address of Net users.

Ihavemoved.com (www.ihavemoved.com), simplymove.co.uk (www.simplymove.co.uk), and the Post Office (www.royalmail.com) will inform different departments when users of their sites move house.

If successful, it's expected more departments will get involved, allowing people to notify the whole of government in a single transaction.

The Cabinet Office assured us: "As with any service, people can use it or not use it. People are going to know what they're signing up to."



Privacy problems?

Philip Chalmers, Business Development Manager for ihavemoved.com, said: "Just because [users] choose to inform the DVLA that does not mean that their change of address will automatically go to the Inland Revenue."

The scheme is affiliated to the government's UK Online Portal (www.ukonline.gov.uk), intended to be a single point of entry for government services. One of the features will be pages focused around 'life episodes', where information will be available on such events as having a baby and learning to drive. Over time, it's believed people will be able to post information such as registering a birth to the portal.

HOT TOPIC IN FOCUS

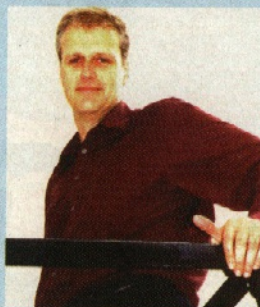
Is WAP great for mobile Net access?

WAP MOBILE PHONES ARE THE LATEST CRAZE, BUT ARE THEY ANY GOOD?



Derek A Langley
PRESIDENT, HEXAWARE TECHNOLOGIES

Currently, WAP mobile users find the small screen size restrictive. However, WAP is particularly effective for interactive, mobile access to critical information such as emails and calendars, bank statements, news, share trading and airline ticket reservation. The problem is that not all mobile devices are WAP compliant or have multimedia capabilities or the ability to receive emails. However, the WAP standard is definitely here to stay.



Keith Marsden
UK MD, YAC.CO.UK

Technically, it seems bizarre that users should deny WAP the same development curve granted to other new technologies. It is partly the fault of the industry. The expectation bar was raised far too high upon its launch earlier this year. On the horizon, of course, it faces challenges from other industry initiatives. In Japan, users are benefiting from NTT's iMode and 3G is just a couple of years away, so WAP should be viewed as what it really is – a stepping stone technology.



Sean Phelan
MD, MULTIMAP.COM

WAP has shown that the rules of marketing apply as much to whizzy new technologies as to any product. Promise more than you can deliver and consumers will be disappointed; deliver more than promised, and the world will beat a path to your portal. WAP is a nice way of delivering low-definition content over slow links, and it has enormous potential for local information, maps and directions. But it isn't multimedia, and certainly isn't the transcendental surfing experience promised.

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www.ic24.net
FREE REALLY MEANS FREE

net shopping



IN CASE YOU HADN'T NOTICED, FOOTBALL'S BACK. THE DOMESTIC SEASON IS UNDERWAY AND ENGLAND ARE AT IT AGAIN. LET'S GO FOOTIE SHOPPING...

Balls do that!

For men who are always losing their balls, AllBalls (www.allballs.co.uk) is guaranteed to fill the onion sack, as they say.

Whether you've got jumpers for goalposts or you're knocking them in

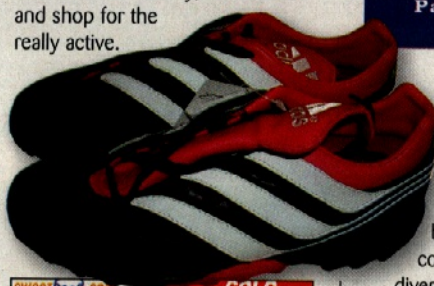


at the San Siro, AllBalls will have something for you. The site sells balls of all shapes and sizes and for lots of different sport. An apt name then, and the site's just been revamped as well to be extra-user friendly. Five-a-side players are accommodated - there are footballs for indoor astroturf as well as grass pitches in a range of colours and styles. Balls!



Kinky boots

Sweatband (www.sweatband.com) is devoted to the serious sportsperson. More than just an e-tailer for replica kits, Sweatband is an online community, news outlet and shop for the really active.



Featuring competitions as well as all the best gear, Sweatband is a very good one-stop for all your sweaty needs. As for football, there are some good deals on strips if you're buying in bulk to kit out a work or pub team. For the individual the new

Nike Air Zoom Fortress shinpads are very funky for just £20, and coupled with this funky pair of Adidas Predators you should be able to play like Gary Lineker, rather than Gary Neville.

Pack up your old Kit bag

If you're getting sick of football, keep your eyes on Kitbag (www.kitbag.com). While there are lots of retro-jerseys and everything a budding soccer maniac could wish for, it's started to diversify into other sports as well thanks to a site overhaul.

Just in time for the new season Kitbag has got all the Premiership and Scottish kits



from just under £40.00. The site is also WAP-enabled, meaning you can buy replica kits while walking down the street (if you really want to). Just use wap.kitbag.com.

Geooooooooaaaaaall!

Speaking of jumpers for goalposts, if you'd rather have something more impressive in your back garden - or for your local team - look no further than Newitts (www.newitts.com). The five-a-side goals in this range vary in price, starting at just over £200 - though the goalkeeper isn't included. If you've got bigger ambitions than that, then take a look at the Euro goal. It stands at just over 7.32m wide

HEAD TO HEAD RUGBY PLUS vs RFU ONLINE

SCRUM DOWN FOR THE 'OTHER' WINTER SPORT, RUGBY...

Rugby Plus (www.rugbyplus.com)	Features	RFU Online (www.rugbyshopping.com)
No	Registration?	No
Very simple...	Easy ordering system?	...just like the average rugby player
Rugby shirts, plain and simple.	What do they sell?	Lots of different merchandise, not just kits
Uses Worldpay. Everything you'd expect	Credit cards?	Access, Visa, Switch, Delta. The basics
Some League; mostly Union	League and Union?	Just Union. It is the RFU site, after all...
Ruck	Ruck or maul?	Maul
Limited special offers, everything else full price	Value for money?	Yes, and a good range
Public	Did it go to public or private school?	Private (see, it works both ways)
No	Does it sell tickets for games?	Yes, but you'll have to go via Ticketmaster
Just shirts	Odd-shaped balls?	Odd-shaped and some signed as well
Jonathan Davies; good for Union and League	If it was a rugby player, who would it be?	Will Carling - smooth and sophisticated
Just big blokes bashing into each other	Final verdict?	A nice bit of rough and tumble



and 2.44m tall and retails at £930 for a pair, and it should be high up on your priorities - if not your shopping list. There's everything in between, of course, and Newitts has a formidable range of sports equipment for everything from aerobics to weight training

England expects

We're a cultural melting pot at *Practical Internet*; having a ginger-haired Scotsman on board ensures that bigotry is not a word in our dictionary (though "haggis" is). Therefore the recent Euro 2000 events left us totally unmoved, and we'll be equally irascible when England play Germany in the World Cup 2002 qualifier in October.

England Direct



(www.England-direct.com) is the place to go to buy Three Lions merchandise. You can buy the official England jersey here for just £39.99 (exactly the same price you'll find it everywhere else, but without the hassle).



news in brief

THE LATEST CONSUMER NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF ONLINE SHOPPING...

Get hitched, virtually

If you're considering getting married but aren't sure you can cope with the responsibility, wedding Web site Confetti.co.uk (www.confetti.co.uk) has got the answer. To coincide with the video release of the Richard Gere and Julia Roberts movie *Runaway Bride*, the site has created the virtual groom. Called the Tom-I-Gotcha (get the idea yet?), brides-to-be can take their virtual groom on dates and send them gifts, kisses, telephone calls and letters. Confetti.co.uk is giving away 5,000 of the devices which can be worn on the wrist.



Protect yourself

Online shopping often blows high street prices away. As the name suggests, www.discountsports.co.uk is one of those places. It's just £8.00 for these Mitre shipnads to protect your ankles and the site has got lots of other good deals.



welcome to confetti.co.uk
weddings and special occasions

It's a long way up that aisle - give them something beautiful to look at

weddings • *the Eastern Influence* Buddhist 'weddings' gifts • *adopt a dolphin* Good deeds all round! parties • *fall-safe* handover cues. Well, you never know travel • *there when you need it* The confetti currency can save • *made for each other?* Take the tests cards • *all your wedding stationery* Everything!

READERS' BEST NET BARGAINS

HAVE YOU SHOPPED ONLINE? SEND US YOUR STORY, WHETHER GOOD OR BAD, TO PI@PARAGON.CO.UK

Nadia is a photographer with a keen eye for eCommerce. She's been buying things online for nearly a year now. She finds that it is much easier that way.

She says: "The best bargain I ever found was my beloved digital camera. I bought the Agfa CL30 for a measly £250 (www.gb.buy.com). I've taken it with me everywhere since, and it has been an absolute godsend for getting pictures on to my desktop quickly.

"I've got lots of favourite shops for work and pleasure, but I'm a big fan of using Shoptmart (www.shoptmart.com) to compare prices and save time. It's just had a revamp and it's the best place to go if you want to find out the cheapest buys. It saves hours of searching through the Internet looking at thousands of different sites. Of course I've also used Amazon (www.amazon.co.uk). Hasn't everyone? I'm a big fan of the Harry Potter books, so I pre-ordered the new one months before it was actually released - it didn't even have a name when I put in my order"

First online purchase:

"The first thing I ever bought online was a CD. It was ages ago now, and I've bought lots of items since, but I'm fairly sure it was a Robbie Williams album. I remember worrying about giving my credit card details over the Internet, but it was so cheap that I thought why not go ahead with it? I haven't looked back since!"



Name: Nadia Welham
Age: 22
Occupation: Photographer



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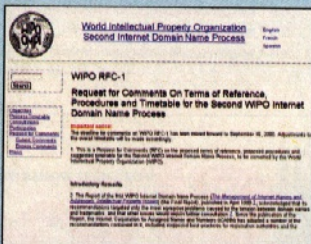
SHOP@HOME is the world's first monthly Internet shopping magazine for women. Every month we bring you fresh ideas for all the family, from household makeovers to where to buy designer perfumes for half price.

And there's more. SHOP@HOME tells you where to find the latest news, gossip, advice and current affairs on the Internet. If you want a new job, a new house or even a new man, SHOP@HOME tells you where to look!

A man wearing a yellow hard hat and a dark plaid shirt is holding a large, rolled-up blueprint. He is looking directly at the camera. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

James Seabright fears cyber-squatting threatens genuine Web sites

DOMAIN NAMES ARE so central to a Web site's identity that the phrase 'dot com' is fast becoming the standard means of referring to something Internet-related. This has come about thanks to the cheap and easy availability of domain names, which has helped raise the profile of many zero-budget hobby sites. Unfortunately, it's also opened the floodgates for the registration of domains in bad faith by cybersquatters, hoping to make a fast buck by selling on names.



New WIPO proposals pose a real threat to the online identity of independent Web sites

Cybersquatters have been troubled by the creation of arbitration bodies with the power to forcibly transfer a domain in cases where they see evidence of "bad faith, abusive, misleading or unfair use". This sounds like a common sense solution to the problem, although recent proposals from WIPO (www.wipo.net), vastly extend the definition of such domains. If implemented, these guidelines could spell real trouble for bona fide hobbyist or independent Web sites. For instance, if I chose to set up a site called belgianbun.com to extol the virtues of my favourite pastry, I would risk being stripped of the domain if a Belgian bun manufacturer took a dislike to my site.

These new guidelines are bad news for Web authors everywhere, as their potential for damage goes much further than my unhealthy interest in Flemish patisseries. They could spell the end of consumer campaign sites such as the highly successful flamingjords.com, and other great sites that use the Internet to good effect. You can register your comments about the proposals by visiting WIPO.

ALL THAT'S NEW IN THE WORLD OF WEB SITE
CONSTRUCTION IS REPORTED HERE, ALONG
WITH YOUR NEW SITES AND OUR GURU'S VIEWS

Cookies crumble

MICROSOFT IS CURRENTLY beta testing cookie management software, aimed at better informing consumers about the creation of cookies during Web browsing sessions. Web site developers who have, until now, relied on cookie-based methods to hold together everything from shopping cart systems to personalised site views, will be forced to reconsider the usefulness of the technology.

The area of Web development that will be hardest hit is advertising. Web advertising networks such as DoubleClick have used cookies for many years. This is in an attempt to tailor adverts delivered to consumers down to an individual level. However, the new default setting for cookie security means that each time a third-party cookie is offered to the Web browser, Internet Explorer will



Contents

- [CookieCrusher Information](#)
- [Messages Board](#)
- [Press Releases](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [CyberClean/CyberClean
Crusher/IM](#)
- [CyberClean Center
Partners/CyberClean
News](#)
- [Technical Support](#)
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COOKIE CRUSHER

Controls Web Cookies



In the Spotlight

► **[Cookie Crusher v2.6 Released](#)**

Control Web cookies in real-time with our award-winning cookie manager. New features include support for multiple cookie paths, improved control over cookies present in the accept/from/reject from lists, and a more refined cookie controlling procedure.

- Download [Cookie Crusher](#).
- Purchase [Cookie Crusher](#) from our [Online Store](#).
- Visit [thelimit.org](#) and learn more about protecting your privacy.



► **[CyberClean v1.5 Now Available](#)**

Clear Internet debris including cache remnants, history files, URL references and more with CyberClean. The latest release supports automatic loading and cleaning at Windows start-up without user intervention.

- Download the [CyberClean](#) trial edition.
- Purchase a full edition from our [Online Store](#).

Newsletter

Site Search

The Limit Software Inc.
PO Box 380
East Chicago, IN 46312
Fax +1 219 392 2468
info@lswi.it

Popular shareware package Cookie Cruncher already offers many of the cookie management features now integrated in IE5.5

prompt the user to ask whether they want to accept it.

Polishing off cookies

Advertisers' use of cookies has always raised concerns about infringing personal privacy. Microsoft has responded to calls from the Internet and Privacy Committee of the American National Association of Attorneys General by developing major changes to cookie handling.

Problems may also arise for sites that don't offer third-party

cookies. A new Delete All button in the Internet Options dialog will make it easier than ever for users to regularly wipe their system of cookies. Although shareware packages to purge systems of cookies have been available for a long time, their use has been limited to users concerned enough about security to find and download the software. The impact of such features being integrated into the world's favourite Web browser, will be far greater.

ACTINIC AND EBUILDER UPGRADE

TWO OF THE world's favourite eCommerce software solution packages are now available in new versions. British eCommerce software maker, Actinic, has released version four of its popular Catalog product, with a slew of new features including bonus templates and page design options, online stock control, customer detail recall, and no increase on the £349 RRP. Full details, and a trial version, are available online at www.actinic.co.uk.

Meanwhile, Multiactive Software have upgraded its £125 ecBuilder package to version five. This offers a better selection of templates and credit card processing methods and improved currency handling. The Web sites www.ecbuilder.com and www.ecbuilder.co.uk have demonstration packages and further details. Both of these software solutions are available only for PCs running Windows.

[www.actinic.co.uk](#) *It's intelligent, give customers what they buy*

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Actinic the ecommerce enabler




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contents

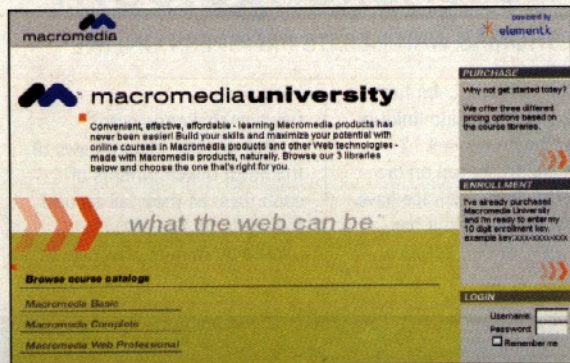
Actinic Ships Catalogue v4
Friday 4th August 2000
Actinic announces shipping of its eagerly-awaited version 4.0 of Catalogue, offering many new features.
Coming also as Actinic Business, a new e-commerce product for the business-to-business market.

Catalogue v4 wins Gold Award
Actinic Catalogue v4 turned in a score of 91% to claim a coveted Gold Award from Internet Works



BA HONS (MACROMEDIA)

ALTHOUGH MACROMEDIA, THE Web software developer, produces some of the most popular packages for Web site development, they're also notoriously tricky for beginners to grasp. A solution is now available thanks to a collaboration between Macromedia and Element K, a leading e-learning provider. The Macromedia University at <http://macromedia.elementk.com> offers a wide range of tutorials for three



The latest versions of Opera and the new Enigma browser will rival IE and Netscape

different levels of user – Basic, Complete, and Web Professional. Fees are much more reasonable than the megabucks you'll pay to study at a real university, with the Basic package of 17 courses costing a mere \$99 (£60) per year. There's even a Student Union section on the site to keep in touch with your fellow inmates. However, the site was only offering Windows versions of the plug-ins needed for the self-study courses at the time of our visit, which effectively excludes the large Macintosh user base enjoyed by Macromedia.

FLIP-FLOPS BACK IN FASHION

A NEW ONLINE service will finally give flip-flops a good name. The free www.flipflop.to server allows anyone to use their own computer as a Web server, and provides them with a memorable URL. In the past, it was impractical for dial-up users to run their own Web server, as their computer's IP address changes each time they connect to the Net. Flipflop gets around this problem by tracking down the computer regardless of its IP address, and even presents visitors with a 'come back later' page if the Web server happens to be offline.



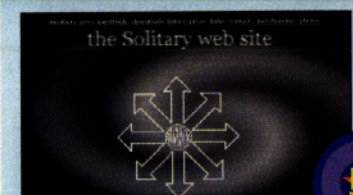
Everyone joins in



AS MENTIONED IN previous Web building news items, iSyndicate is a leading provider of free content for Web sites, offering an enormous range of material to an even wider selection of sites. The latest content provider to join the iSyndicate fold is Everyone.net, allowing users to enjoy branded Web-based email, discussion boards and chat rooms with minimum hassle for the site owner. As with all iSyndicate content, this is controlled through the online Control Center, making these advanced Web site add-ons accessible to even the least technically confident of Webmasters.

READER'S SITES OF THE MONTH

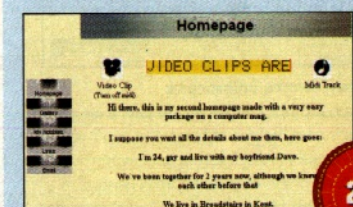
GET A MENTION HERE BY SENDING YOUR URL TO [JAMES@PARAGON.CO.UK](mailto:james@paragon.co.uk)



Solitary

Site creator: Tony Simpson
URL: www.solitary.org.uk

Comment: A band home page that has everything you'd expect to see on a professional site, although a few errors keep it from looking its best. Java is a little overused, but doesn't get in the way of the other features, such as MP3 samples of the band's music. Also, this is one of the few respectable uses of a graphical page background that I've seen in a long time!



Chris & Dave's Home Page

Site creator: Chris and Dave
URL: www.geocities.com/chrisanddave_uk

Comment: This is a good-looking personal site, although its creator has obviously stuck quite closely to one of the templates provided by NetObjects Fusion. This doesn't detract too much from the range of original content in various media that makes this site an interesting place to visit.



Sweatman

Site creator: Tony Sweatman
URL: www.sweatman.org.uk

Comment: Another NetObjects Fusion user, another unimaginative use of a template! Design-wise, Tony could have made more consistent use of font sizes and page divisions, although the overall look is a clean one. It would be good to see more of the Sweatman family archive online, as this site is currently limited to a few choice extracts.

DOMAIN NAME NEWS

Don't judge a book by its dot com

Penguin recently published a book entitled 'katie.com' in the USA, although it neither owned the domain nor sought permission from Katie Jones, the Londoner who has been using the address since 1996 for her personal home page. Penguin is unrepentant in its decision, and it appears that the law is on its side in this bizarre case of reverse cybersquatting.



New UK sub-domain goes live

If you've found that you're having some problems in getting the domain name of your dreams, a new registrar that also provides Web hosting services might be right up your street. An address such as www.baseball.page.co.uk can be yours from only £35 per year. Remember, however, that the Page.co.uk service is only providing users with a sub-domain, in a similar way to free services www.tsx.org and www.cjb.net.

Site in Focus



BT Global Challenge: www.btchallenge.com

AS THE ROUND-THE-WORLD YACHT RACE GETS UNDERWAY, ELLIOT THOMAS WATCHES ITS PROGRESS ONLINE

new sites

THIS MONTH'S HOTTEST NEW SITES AND WHERE TO FIND THEM

MAY DIVORCE BE WITH YOU

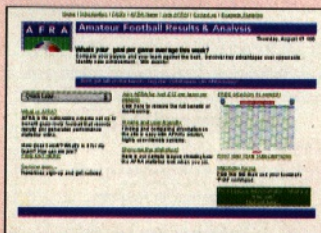


www.divorce-online.co.uk

If your other half is soon to gain a life of their own, help is at hand. You can't yet get divorced on the Internet but Divorce Online offers everything from general advice on finance, custody and access, and property matters to purchasing your own DIY divorce information pack.

The site has a team of experts online who can offer general advice, and there's even a friendly chat room where you can exchange advice to others suffering marital problems.

JUMPERS FOR GOALPOSTS



www.afra.co.uk

This new Web site kicks off at the beginning of this year's football season in style. It offers a full weekly analysis of all amateur matches across the country.

If you fancy finding out how your left-wing wizard is getting on, just log on and have instant online access to his performance statistics, as well as a full round up of results and tables.

At just £12 for a team to subscribe a season, this site is sure to score.

IF OLD CHRIS Columbus had the technology of today, finding the Americas would have been a doddle. He would have been able to relay images of his adventure over the Internet and if the wife

got a bit anxious, calm her worries via a satellite link-up.

Now the crew of all 12 yachts due to set sail on the BT Global Challenge race have this technology, and it has even been used to set up a

Web site (www.btchallenge.com).

This site has instant news of the latest developments of each team as they sail around the world. It also delivers minute-by-minute coverage of

RECENT NEWS

Keep hot on the heels of the leader or tack at the back of the pack. Whatever you choose, you can get up-to-date information on the team you're cheering on. The stories also offer plenty of related articles for those little bits of extra information.

MEDIA GALLERY

This is one of the most impressive areas of the site. The Media Gallery has loads of photos, plus audio and video clips of the teams as they sail across the worlds seas and oceans. Keep yourself updated in this section and feel part of the team.

SHOPPING

If you find the call of the sea is getting too strong, why not satisfy your desire by spending a bit of money? The BT Challenge Shop has everything from a BT Challenge baseball cap to a salty sea dog teddy.

VIRTUAL RACE

Register here and become your own skipper in the comfort of your own home. Choose your own crew, test your decision making skills and see how good you really are at team building. Ahoy there!

Quokkasports® @ Network: quokkasports.com | mountainzone.com | nbc.com



Global Challenge
The world's toughest yacht race

STATUS
20 days to race start
10 SEP 2000

MENU

- Front Page
- News
- Features
- Media Gallery
- Teams
- Race Information
- Glossary
- Business Challenge
- Shopping
- Forums
- Virtual Race

Helicopter Evacuation

Indiana Jones descends on a training crew practicing in the Solent. [Full story](#)

Weather Forecasting

How Challenge sailors read the weather; how it dictates their path. [Full story](#)

In News

- Trading Places
- Under the Weather
- Business Club Members

In Features

- Commentary: The Countdown Begins
- CV Spotlight: "Cows" Week

In Business Challenge

- Business Challenge: Sponsors on board for Challenge.

BT Hospitality

- BT Hospitality: Tickets for spectator boat during Race start.

FEATURES

This section gives a human angle to the site. You can find out more about the crew and their families. There's also an opportunity to sit back and listen to the crew talking to you about the race. The features are wide ranged and varied, from team building exercises to the worst toilet in the world.

the race, pin-pointing exactly where each boat is in the world. Features include live audio and video clips, which are produced and edited onboard and then posted on the Web. The journals for each of the crews are available, so you know what they're up to and how they're getting on as they undertake the challenge. There's a heavy emphasis on sponsors on the site, and a lot of news is purely PR guff, but you can hardly blame anyone as all the cash raised is through sponsorship.

BT Global Challenge is a user friendly, well planned, and impressive site, which even caters for those who know nothing about sailing. Its glossary helps to explain any terms that only Popeye might use. And if any boredom should set in, BT Global Challenge

offers a virtual race, so now you can pit yourself against the perils of the open sea, without getting wet!

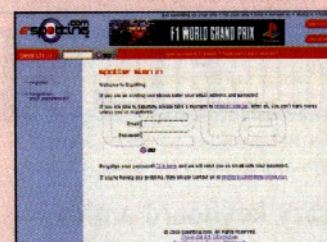


Long for a life on the ocean wave? Satisfy your needs here

new sites

THIS MONTH'S HOTTEST NEW SITES AND WHERE TO FIND THEM

CLICK-THROUGH CASH-FLOW?



www.espotting.com

Searching the Web could become a profitable business as well as being a sometimes irritating and time-consuming thanks to a new site. Apparently a first in Europe, Espotting is offering its users a free account and rewards for clicking through on to the selected sites. There are catches, of course – clicking on to such a site usually gets you a whopping one penny, though referring a friend can make your account leap by a whole 25p. Users get £2.00 for signing up but have to accumulate at least £10 before anything can be spent online.

MAMA MIA



www.miadolan.com

Mia Dolan is the self-styled Psychic For The Millennium, and she's come up with a new way of predicting your future. It's apparently nothing to do with astrology, but uses horoscopes rather than star-gazing to determine a person's wellbeing. We're not entirely sure where the two diverge but Mia's philosophy seems to be that she can make psychic predictions based around star signs. It's going to take a credit card to reveal your intimate future, but a browse around the rest of the site is entertaining enough and free. Good fun, especially the Ghost Busting pages detailing Mia's encounters with the spirit world.

TEAMS

This section has everything you need to know on the various crews. Loads and loads of information is available here. You can access any one of the crew's statistics and background information, you can also find their latest journal addition here as well. Easy to navigate through and definitely worth spend some time at.

UPDATES

Keep ahead of the competition by registering your email and get updated with all the latest news. Register your details and you'll get a free screensaver as well (lucky you).



You can follow the yachts at their various ports of call

RACE INFORMATION

It may take a while to get through all of this, but it's worth it. Features include schedules for estimated times of arrivals and departures, race maps, and the history of the race. There's also a virtual 360° tour below deck.

mpics.com | golf.com | volvoceanrace.org | quokkasailing.com

Enabling Quokka Sports Immersion!!

COMPAQ **COMPUTER ASSOCIATES**

Visit the Quokka Performance Team

Update me with the latest news

Your email

In Registration

- Register now for your free screensaver.

In Race Information

- Learn more about this race.
- Local Events: What's happening in Southampton before the start of the Race.

Sign-up to become a crew volunteer.

Race Charity: Save the Children's relief efforts

In Forums

Community if Forums if

Forums: Let your voice be heard.

Shopping

BT Challenge Store.com: Hats, t-shirts and more in

Sponsors: Companies take the lead BT Global Challenge.

Teams W/ Index: Meet the yacht teams.

Helen Couling: Journal: "Stop the planet, I want to have a rest."

Glyn Billinghamurst: Journal: "I've never been so stressed!"

Media Gallery

Photos: On the Hard

hard wired

STAY UP-TO-DATE WITH ALL THAT'S HIP AND HAPPENING IN THE WORLD OF INTERNET HARDWARE AND COMPUTING PERIPHERALS

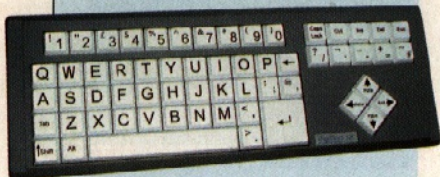


news in brief

MORE NET GADGETS TO CREATE A FUSS DOWN AT DIXONS IN THE NEAR FUTURE

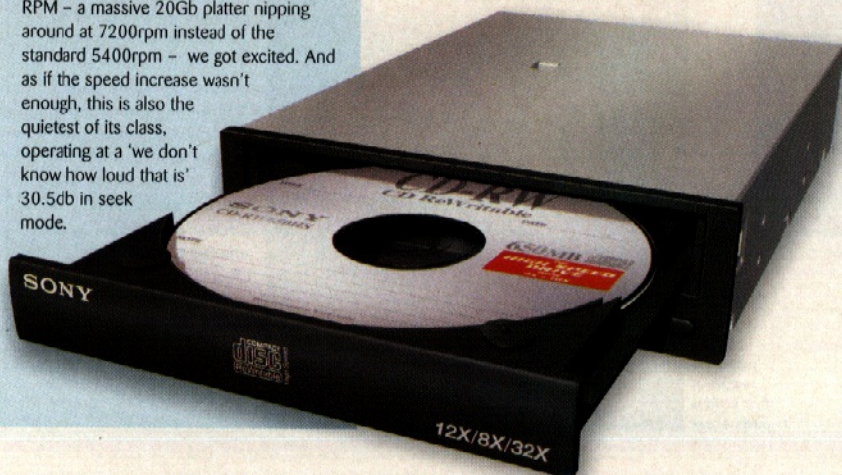
Krazy keyboard antics

IF THE TRADITIONAL bogstandard keyboard leaves you about as cold as a Polar Bear's private bits, we might have found the solution for you. The BigKeys LX keyboard from Keytools features, surprisingly enough, big keys... really big keys. The keys on this baby are actually four, yes four, times as big as your standard affair, meaning that you have a quadrupled chance of connecting those sausage fingers to the correct letter. But get this – the BigKeys keyboard only takes up the same amount of desk space as your common or garden Microsoft number. How do they do that, we hear you ask. Well, the clever types at Keytools have discarded 'confusing' and seldom-used keys so that the QWERTY layout could be made all the bigger. This could be just the thing for sufferers of RSI, put off by the fiddly keys of old.



A new platter plateau

We've seen the size and power of the humble hard drive grow as quickly as Britney Spears' bits during her mysterious time away from the limelight, but speed is normally sacrificed for size. So when we saw Western Digital's WD Caviar 7200 RPM – a massive 20Gb platter nipping around at 7200rpm instead of the standard 5400rpm – we got excited. And as if the speed increase wasn't enough, this is also the quietest of its class, operating at a 'we don't know how loud that is' 30.5db in seek mode.



Product: Graphire Graphite Mouse & Pen Set

Price: £84.99

Contact: www.wacom.co.uk



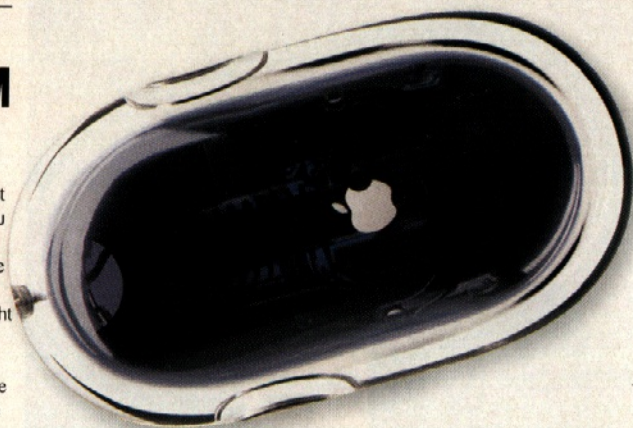
Product: Apple Pro Mouse

Price: £39

Contact: www.apple.com/ukstore

MAC MOUSE MAYHEM

WHILE APPLE STOLE the world's heart with its compendium of iMacs, G3s and G4s, there was rumblings of discontent about that weird mouse thing it insisted on making. You know the one – it looks like an ice hockey puck. Well, that's all sorted out now, with the all new Apple Pro Mouse. Costing a meagre £39, this sweet little thing is not only the right size for an adult to use, but it's also optical. This is a great improvement, as it means those pesky little ball things are a thing of the past. As if this wasn't enough for this mouse to trap you, it doesn't even have a button. Instead, you click anywhere on the mouse – in effect, the whole mouse is a button.



Product: Sony CRX160E-RP

Price: £179.99 + VAT

Contact: www.sony-cp.com

CHARCOAL BURNER

CD BURNERS NORMALLY look about as attractive as a Scunthorpe lass, so whenever we see one as tasty as this, we just have to rant about it. Coming in a rather fetching charcoal colour, the CRX160E-RP is much more than a pretty face, though. In fact, this burner is one of the fastest kicking around at the moment, with a gargantuan 12x writing speed, and a very impressive 8x CD-RW writing there for the taking. Sony claims that this rewriting speed makes their charcoal burner the first drive to offer comparable performance to entry level removable magnetic discs, only with more capacity.

SEE-THROUGH STORAGE

TRANSLUCENT IS IN. Don't deny it, because it is. And we just love it when something that could have been boring, bland and beige arrives on our desks looking all matt and see-through. That's why the FlipDisk from Amacom sent our excitable hearts into a flutter. With its see-through deep blue exterior, this beauty can store anything up to a cool 36Gb of information, and contains a handy flippable PCMCIA card – hence the name. Apart from the sheer beauty of this creature, we just love the fact that it's so compact, a size that belies its sheer power, speed and capacity. Amacom has even updated the whole thing to be USB compatible, meaning that you can transfer all your favourite Billy Joel MP3s all the quicker.



Product: Amacom FlipDisk

Price: £329 (10Gb)

Contact: www.amacom-tech.com

news in brief

MORE NET GADGETS TO CREATE A FUSS DOWN AT DIXONS IN THE NEAR FUTURE

iFeel love

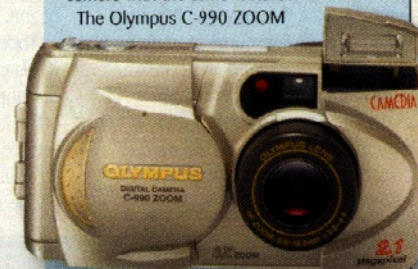
RIGHT, WE'VE ALL seen how popular the optical mouse has become recently, with its neat idea of not having a messy ball to fiddle about with that needs constant cleaning. Well, Logitech has taken the space left by the absence of said ball with the iFeel Mouse and replaced it with some fancy sensory technology. Get this – when you move the mouse over elements on the screen, be they links, menus or whatever, the sensor is activated. This lets the user 'feel' events on the screen, which set our minds racing in all sorts of seedy directions. We're not entirely sure at the moment, but this might just be the future of mousiness.



Snap happy

THE WORLD OF digital cameras keeps getting better and better. Just when you think that you're going to have to splash out the value of your house to get decent technology, along comes a much cheaper camera with the same features.

The Olympus C-990 ZOOM



provides you with a more than respectable 2.1 million pixel CCD to capture those special moments, as well as a handy 3x zoom. We're particularly keen on the through the lens action when it comes to altering the fiddly bits before taking your picture, so you don't have to keep piddling around with the screen to take a decent photo.



Product: Casio Cassiopeia EM-500

Price: £399.99

Contact: www.casio.co.uk

A PC IN YOUR POCKET

THIS HANDILY PORTABLE PC should be ideal for all those youngsters weaned on completely mobile communications. Apart from having the expected WAP browsing and email capabilities, this wondrous beast can turn its hand to all kinds of multimedia tricks. We frankly wouldn't give it the time of day if there were no MP3 or MPEG capabilities, but the Cassiopeia EM 500 does so much more. With a 150Mhz processor helped along by 16Mb of RAM, you can bet your bottom dollar that your standard Windows programs and systems will be as zippy as the great character from *Rainbow* himself. Oh, and it looks a treat, too.

Product: Sony DSC-F505V

Price: around £850

Contact: www.sony.co.uk

SILVER SNAPPER

APART FROM LOOKING more space age than a digital camera really has a right to do, this joyous piece of kit from Sony could be one of the best you'll get your hands on for the time being. With an effective 2.62 mega-pixel resolution there for the taking, even the most bumbling of digital photographers should be able to capture a decent shot. The 10x digital zoom gets us terribly excited, but probably for the wrong reasons, although the 130° rotating lens will make it easy to grab even the most inopportune of shots. We think that, if you're into photography, the DSC F50V might just bring a twinkle to your tired and weary eyes.



net profile

Tony Martin: Sony's online music maestro

MANY BELIEVED THAT THE INTERNET WOULD SOUND THE DEATH KNEEL FOR RECORD COMPANIES. ROBIN LEWIS TALKS TO TONY MARTIN, SONY MUSIC'S EMEDIA MAESTRO, ABOUT WHY THE FUTURE'S STILL BRIGHT FOR LABELS

Tony Martin has taken a newly-created position in one of the biggest corporations in the world, working in one of the most volatile and fast-moving technologies around. His department has been fully up and running for just a week. All things considered, he's pretty calm.

The Director of eMedia at Sony Music is not a man to be taken lightly, however. He refers to the Internet as "the Wild West"; and it's a frontier he's at home with.

Despite the fact that he comes from a relatively small company – his own, Music Online – Tony and Sony go back a long way: "It started with me being a recording artist. The music I produced was based around dance music, and I've always worked with computers." Searching for a record deal, he ended up signing to Creation Records, before getting a bigger

deal with Sony. With the money from that, he formed his own label and recording studio. Then came Music Online, Tony's Internet company, and from there back to Sony to take the helm at the newly-formed eMedia department. Tony – and the department – were becoming essentials: "They were building a whole bunch of Web sites with no real strategy tying them together. It had become apparent that there was the need for a strategic overview of what Sony was trying to accomplish online."

Though he keeps his cards close to his chest about future developments, already announced is the launch of a short messaging service (SMS) providing artist news for music fans via their mobile phones. Tony admits that his feet

haven't touched the ground since starting: "There's been an incredible amount of micro-management while I've been building the department. Neil Cartwright [the Webmaster who ran the department previously] was limited in what he could achieve by a severe lack of resources. Now

break in stride: "For me it's been a natural progression because the thread that runs through it all is technology. If there's anything I miss it's sitting in front of a computer writing music – rather than sitting in front of a computer writing a memo."

"Music on the Internet is a \$100m industry trapped in a \$40m body"

everyone has realised we're going to be doing a lot more. All of a sudden it feels like all 400 people in this building have their own pet emedia project and it's our job to deliver on those. With the new department we can."

Global resources

Now the eMedia department is up and running, using the resources a giant like Sony can provide. Tapping into these resources is not as easy as it sounds, despite what some may think: "Sony has problems because of its size and scale. At Music Online what I said usually went. At Sony what I say usually goes to the lawyers."

This doesn't mean that there's no room for innovation: "Sony's a forward-thinking company and it's not scared of new ideas."

"I've had to figure out how best to exploit the strengths of an organisation like this – and not let its weaknesses get to me. There are corporate allowances I have to make and we can't always do what we would like to do. The upside is that we have got a huge footprint, and massive cross-promotional potential. We're going to do everything we can to exploit the Sony brand."

Keeping such a big company on its toes was never going to be easy, but Tony Martin has gone from gunslinger to lawman with barely a

"But this is probably the most exciting period the music industry has ever been through – and I'm still doing exciting and compelling stuff." He believes that the explosion of online music can be sustained. Those wanting to jump on the .com bandwagon should be wary, however. Though there's potentially a lot more than just a fistful of dollars available for those involved in the online music industry, it's not a giveaway. "Music on the Internet is a \$100m industry trapped in a \$40m body. But the Internet hasn't created a level playing field. There are more opportunities for efficient marketing to take place. Marketing takes money – and record companies have money."

"It's pointless building a Web site and thinking that people will visit it. You need money to persuade them to come."

Yet the musical landscape has been forever altered by the Internet. Though Sony Music will remain a big player for many years to come, Tony believes that its role must change: "The marketing emphasis online is becoming ever-more important. For the first time we're approaching a space where there isn't going to be a dominant format. That's the nettle the industry has to grasp."

"That's why they've got people like me."



Tony Martin, a former recording artist himself and now a record company guru



"For the first time we are approaching a space where there isn't going to be a dominant format. That's the nettle the industry has to grasp"

TONY MARTIN

FACTFILE

WHO? Tony Martin

AGE? 37

JOB? Director, eMedia at Sony Music

WORTH? "After nine zeroes it becomes a bit irrelevant." That's Sony, not Tony.

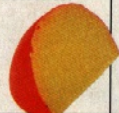
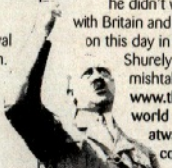
BACKGROUND? One year of a fine art degree. Worked as a recording artist, did stage and lighting design to supplement his income. Signed originally for Creation Records (among others), and then got a deal with Sony. Formed Music Online, which helped promote such artists as Radiohead with the money from the Sony deal. Was appointed Head of New Media at Sony earlier this year.

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS? Neil Cartwright, formerly Sony's Webmaster and now the company's New Media Manager.

web diary

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S HAPPENING ONLINE THIS MONTH

21 SEPT – 18 OCT 2000

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				21 The BBC Short Film festival starts in Leicester Square, celebrating such British 'talent' as Vinnie Jones. www.vinniejones.co.uk	22 It's National Car Free Day, so don't forget to walk to work in the rain! www.eta.co.uk 	23 It's the start of London Fashion Week with some of the world's top fashion designers... www.londonfashionweek.co.uk 
24 Live 2000, the UK's biggest home entertainment and new technology event finishes at Earls Court. www.live2000.com 	25 Over 600 cheeses will be sniffed at the British Cheese Festival. Say cheese! www.thecheeseweb.com 	26 The Royal Charity Gala in aid of the Jill Dando memorial fund takes place in Chelsea. http://westonhospicecare.org.uk/jill_dando_memorial_fund.htm	27 Meatloaf, the bloke who'll do anything for love, celebrates his 53rd birthday today. www.meatloaf-oic.com	28 Geoff Hurst's 1966 world cup shirt goes under the hammer alongside most of his trophies during his 20-year career. www.christies.com	29 The world's biggest coffee morning in aid of Macmillan Cancer Relief Awareness Day. Register on www.everyoneswelcome.com to host your own. 	30 Radio One was launched 33 years ago today – and Tony Blackburn was on air. www.bbc.co.uk/radio1
1 Fear the Grey Army – it's the International Day of Older People. www.natpencon.org.uk	2 Prepare for a dark winter, Indie giants Radiohead finally release their long-awaited fourth album entitled <i>Kid A</i>. www.radiohead.co.uk 	3 David Beckham publishes his autobiography entitled <i>David Beckham: My World</i>. www.beckhamania.com 	4 Clueless Baitgirl Alicia Silverstone is 24 today. www.silverstone.org 	5 A two day conference, Exploiting Content on the Web, takes place at the Royal Garden Hotel, London. www.royalgdn.co.uk	6 Hitler announced that he didn't want war with Britain and France on this day in 1939. Surely shome mistake... www.the.worldatwar.com 	7 England take on Germany in a World Cup qualifier. Deja vu, anyone? www.the-fa.org 
8 Chess champion Garry Kasparov defends his crown at the Braingames World Chess Championships. www.braingames.net 	9 Marxist revolutionary Ernesto 'Che' Guevara was executed in Bolivia in 1967. www.cheguevara.com 	10 Teen pop sensation Britney Spears visits Wembley Arena on her world tour. Hit her one more time... www.britneyspears.com 	11 The Women of the Year assembly takes place in the Cafe Royal. Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman in space, is the guest of honour. www.nchafc.org.uk	12 The Alfred Dunhill Cup tees off at St Andrews in Scotland, with Spain defending the title. www.golftoday.co.uk	13 Margaret Thatcher is one more day closer to the grave today – she's 75. www.margaretthatcher.co.uk 	14 Sir Cliff Richard, Britain's evergreen singing sensation, was born in 1940. That means he's 60 years old. www.cliffrichard.org 
15 The IAAF World Junior Championships begins in Santiago, Chile. www.iaaf.org 	16 Chris Rea takes his Eighties wine bar croaking to the Royal Albert Hall tonight. www.roadtohell.com 	17 In 1776, the first cocktail was ordered at a bar in New York. www.cocktail.com 	18 Behind-the-scenes snaps of every film made in the UK in the last five years by Greg Williams go on display in The Strand. www.proudgaleries.com			

IN NEXT MONTH'S **Practical** internet

CENSORED

SEX AND THE NET

...IS IT HARMLESS FUN OR A LURKING DANGER?

Do pornographic Web sites represent a dangerous, sickening side to the Net or are they merely titillating examples of free speech? Next month's *Practical Internet* looks at both sides of the debate by speaking to porn site bosses and their opponents. We show you how to block X-rated material from reaching your PC, reveal the UK's most child-friendly ISPs and look at the dangers of online porn addiction. Don't miss this special feature.

LOG ON FROM EVERY ROOM OF YOUR HOUSE!

If you've got several PCs in your home that you'd like to link up to the Web or your own network to make file sharing, email sending and Net access easier, this is a must-read feature. We'll show you how to do it in simple-to-follow steps with the minimum of expense and hassle. It will all be explained in jargon-free, plain English!

MAKE YOUR SITE HIT THE NET'S BIG TIME

Is your Web site suffering from a lack of visitors? If so, it's time for action! Next month's *Practical Internet* will show you precisely how to send your hit counter spinning by getting ranked in search engines. We'll show you the amazing tweaks that professional Web sites use to get their sites to the top of search engine results pages – and explain how you can do the same.

FREE BOOK PLUS A CD-ROM!

Easy-to-follow guides on sending online greetings cards, setting up firewalls to protect your PC's data from online hackers, and creating Web sites with Flash 5. PLUS! A fantastic free 64 page book giving you a step-by-step guide to creating your very own money-making Web site using the fully-working versions of PagePlus 4 and ShopFactory Flash on our CD, worth a whopping £320!

FREE!
OVER £320 OF FULLY
WORKING SOFTWARE ON
THE CD PLUS A FREE 64
PAGE BOOK ON HOW
TO USE IT ALL

ON SALE 19 OCTOBER

Please note: All contents are in an advanced stage of preparation, but circumstances may prevent publication

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BACKCHAT



TELL US WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT PRACTICAL INTERNET AND THE NET IN GENERAL. EMAIL US AT PI@PARAGON.CO.UK AND YOU COULD WIN A PRIZE

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT THE MAGAZINE OR THE INTERNET IN GENERAL? HERE'S YOUR CHANCE. EMAIL US AT PI@PARAGON.CO.UK OR POST YOUR LETTERS THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY TO PRACTICAL INTERNET, PARAGON PUBLISHING, PARAGON HOUSE, ST PETER'S ROAD, BOURNEMOUTH, DORSET BH1 2JS

Competition winners

Winners of the ten Agfa digital cameras given away in issue 44 were R Lowe (Bradford), F Chandler (Birmingham), H Malik (Epsom), R Welsh (Okehampton), A Watson (Newcastle), K Jubb (Norwich), J Lowther (Stockport), A Smallman (York), J Phiri (London E5) and D Outrim (Harrow). Congratulations to you all!

Letter of the month

Every month, the best letter we receive will win a splendid ZoomCam Webcam (pictured below). The camera is ideal for all sorts of multimedia applications including video capture, video mail and videoconferencing. Available in USB, PPC or ISA versions, these cameras are perfect for bridging the gap between distant family, friends and colleagues.



Letter of the month

Take VAT!

Now that the Internet allows us to shop overseas, perhaps John Miller (*Backchat*, August edition) and others should start to familiarise themselves with current UK law concerning eCommerce.

In brief, items purchased overseas and posted to or brought into the UK are subject to import duty (5%) and VAT (17.5%). Hence, Mr Miller's additional charge on his imported video.

If the goods are British made and returning to their country of origin, they are not liable to import duty, but are still liable to VAT. If they are antique (over 100 years old) they attract VAT at a lower rate of 5%. Otherwise there are no exceptions – not even for gifts.

Of course, it's rather like going through Customs at an airport. Not everyone and everything is caught in the net (sorry, no pun intended!)



There's plenty of helpful advice about tax at the HM Customs site (www.hmce.gov.uk)

It's surely a little unrealistic to expect foreign vendors to tell us about our own laws. When I came across this issue after purchasing from an overseas Web site, I found further information on the HM Customs site (www.hmce.gov.uk), though it's a pain to wade through all the legal jargon.

David Holmes

Very useful, David. Many online shoppers are blissfully unaware of these tax issues when buying online. It's good to point them out.

A taxing issue

After reading the letter from John Miller about getting hammered for import tax in August's *Practical Internet*, it really does bring home the fact that if you do purchase anything outside of the EU you are most definitely going to be saddled



with import costs and VAT. Having said that, if your purchase is under £30, you will tend to get away with it. I have many times.

Purchasing from the Net is no different than actually visiting a country and purchasing an item there, you always take the risk of getting it back into the UK. So, at the end of the day, always read the small print. We should not blame the people who sold the item.

Also, it is not entirely true that we cannot play American (NTSC) video tapes in the UK. Most modern video players now have the capability to play NTSC. The newest

DVD players are also multi-region, so playing Region 1 (American) and Region 2 (British) DVDs is possible. If you do not have a multiplay video, you can get the format converted from NTSC to PAL at any video services shop.

Dave White

Good advice again. We do reckon that many online shops could display warnings about these VAT and technical compatibility issues more prominently. It's in their interests to have happy customers.

World's worst sites continued

While looking for a Web site about her old haunt of Bagshot, my friend found the 'Hair Human



Attachment of the month

PETER BUCKLEY OF Leicester sent us this bizarre attachment showing ponies prancing around in rubbish. We're not quite sure what it's all about either – but it's a novel image! Thanks, Peter.



Got a quirky or funny email attachment that you'd like to share with other readers? Send it to pi@paragon.co.uk with the subject 'Attachment of the month'



Follow the advice given in our Make a Mint feature (issue 45) and you could soon be making loads of money from your Web site

Homepage', a site investigating the biology of body hair.

It would certainly have made the top spot in your June 2000 feature on the 'World's Worst Sites' by a country mile! See for yourself by visiting www.luna.co.uk/~charles.

Alex Warrington

Yikes! We never fail to be amazed by some of the weird sites that are being put online. Some people just have too much time on their hands! Keep sending them in...

A pat on the back

Earlier this year I wrote and complained to you about *Practical Internet's* new layout and the cramped and squashed look that it had. In my opinion I'd like to say it has steadily improved and the latest

Please pass on my thanks to the rest of the team for putting together such an interesting magazine.

Joslyn Michael Willis

Awww shucks, Joslyn. Thanks for your kind comments.

Nice little earner

Thanks for the great feature article on how to earn money from your Web site (Make A Mint, September's issue). This is already starting to pay dividends for me. I signed up to several associate programs after looking at the site you referred to – www.associateprograms.co.uk – and have already earned a few quid.

I'm finding that my links to Amazon's books, music and videos are particularly successful at the moment. Thanks again!

Tom McGregor

One of the main aims of PI is to help readers save and earn money using the Net, so we're delighted to hear that you're doing just that! Send in your Web site address and we'll try to feature it in a future issue.

Book beauty

Many thanks for the super book and great full programs on the CD on the front of your July issue.

I have learnt a tremendous amount about Web construction and the facilities offered by so



called Free ISPs and their 'free' Web space.

I have used NetFusion Objects to create my site and registered CuteFTP from your cover disc to get my site online. My attempt can be seen at

www.sweatman.org.uk. Yours



BEWARE OF THE DOG!

WEB WATCHDOG

BEEN RIPPED OFF BY AN ISP OR ONLINE SHOP AND CAN'T GET A REPLY? SEND YOUR PROBLEMS TO OUR CANINE CONSUMER CRUSADER AT WATCHDOG@PARAGON.CO.UK

Tesco troubles

My wife is getting increasingly frustrated by the inability of Tesco Online to process her orders. She had to phone the help line three times last night owing to server problems. In the end, she gave up and is going to Sainsbury's instead.

I got it in the neck for suggesting she use the service. Are Tesco having trouble coping with demand – it's not the first time this has happened.

Graham Harris



Trolly good show – Tesco.com offers a wide choice of items when it's all working correctly

Web Watchdog spoke to Tesco.com's Russell Craig, who said: "We are extremely sorry that your wife has experienced problems ordering online. Certainly, demand is high, as there are now over 500,000 registered users shopping online with Tesco. However, the difficulties you describe are not commonly reported."

"To understand what has gone wrong with your wife's orders, we would need to look in to the exact circumstances in which they were made. We recommend that your wife contacts Tesco.com's customer complaints department on 0800 50 55 55. We have very helpful staff on hand who can offer her more personal attention and aim to resolve this particular situation."

I was duped by scam

A few weeks ago I was the victim of an Internet scam. While on AOL's home site, a pop-up message noted that my billing arrangements had changed. It was plausible – I had recently changed credit cards – and slick. A direct button was shown to AOL billing. I was prompted to re-enter my credit card details and password. If I'd been smarter, I'd have rebooted my computer.

Next day I checked with AOL, who knew nothing, but £1 had been skimmed from my credit card account. I had to change my card (more painful than the loss) and AOL account details. My

report to AOL, with details of a similar German version that I had ignored, got two identical responses promising investigation.

A few days later, I asked AOL about the investigation, and received a firm brush-off that in the interests of confidentiality they would not reveal details of other users' accounts. I've emailed them twice since then, with no reply. Suddenly they're not interested, despite the fact that there must be many more gullible people like me getting scams like this.

This needs airing. ISPs need to be as open about issues like security and the fact that proprietary interfaces are no guarantee of safety. People in the industry bemoan low internet purchasing, but it won't happen until there is transparency and people can make informed judgements about risk.

I'm still with AOL, but I've re-learned some basic lessons: 1) Never give card details unless you feel secure, 2) Use a low credit limit card for Internet purchases, preferably one offering non-delivery protection, 3) Check your card bills and remember you don't have to give out your details. If in doubt, stop.

Dick Scott

AOL told Web Watchdog: "The issue of online security is of utmost priority to AOL UK as I am sure it is to each of our members and I am concerned you appear to have been the victim of an online scam. AOL UK goes to great lengths to help our members protect themselves while online by providing detailed information on security issues (including scams and hoaxes) and by posting security reminders throughout the service. One example of this is the permanent fixture in every members mail inbox that "AOL staff will never ask for your password or billing information".

"However, online hoaxers are becoming ever more sophisticated in their methods of fraudulently obtaining members details. It is essential that while online members remain vigilant at all times and report anything untoward immediately to ensure that AOL UK can take any appropriate action if necessary."





WEB WATCHDOG **BEWARE OF THE DOG!**

Further information and advice about AOL's online safety can be found on the service at Keyword: Security. To report security concerns, or breaches of AOL's conditions of service, email COSUK@aol.com or alternatively telephone 0800 376 5432 or 0800 376 7444.

Jungle fever

I'm writing to you regarding a recent attempt to purchase a monitor, CTX PR960F, which was reviewed in your fine magazine. I tried to locate a supplier near by to compare the price to Internet prices but alas no one in the area had the model. So I tried Jungle.com. I had previously tried to purchase a CD from them but due to excessive delays on delivery I cancelled that order.

However, I thought I would give them a second chance. On 7/7/00 I placed the order for the PR960F at the site. The timeline shown was 5-10 days plus 3-5 shipping. I could deal with the wait so had no problem with that time line. I watched the order using a good tracking service on their site. The days came and went, and the counter on site ticked down to around the 12th

when the monitor was to have been placed in stock.

My details were updated to say they expected to receive the monitor to ship then I received an email saying that it was out of stock again. Checking the site revealed they would receive it on the 20th. I bite the bullet and wait till the 22nd at 11.30pm.

They have 24 hour customer care it says on the site, I call and get an answer machine. That is not 24 hour customer care! I sent an email to them explaining what had happened to my order and got an auto respond message and no other contact since by email from them.

I called customer care on the 23rd and he then asked me to check back on Monday 24th since it appeared that on his system, the stock had arrived on the 24th. In fact no stock had arrived on the 21st.

I asked them what they intended to do about it and he said it would be shipped if received on 28th. I asked if they would upgrade the delivery time due to the delay, but was told that this could not happen. At this point I gave up. I called and cancelled my order.

I have spent 7-8 years working in customer care for different companies and have a lot of experience ordering over the Net and buy at least once a week online.

Jungle's service has been the worst I have ever encountered in my life - online or



offline. If it doesn't get any better I can see them going the same way as the ill-fated Boo.com.

Forbes Manson

webmaster@virtualscotland.net

Jungle.com told Web Watchdog: "From time to time, some of our product range becomes difficult to obtain and the dates on our Web site are entirely based on information provided by our suppliers. Unfortunately, this can lead to a small amount of information on the site to be inaccurate or backdated as new arrival dates are provided to us. Mr Manson was unfortunately one of the few customers who was affected by this set of circumstances. Rest assured that we track our delivery performance and do put measures in place in the event of dipping service levels."

"In respect of our 24-hour customer service line, we confirm that we now operate from 8am to midnight weekdays and 9am to 6pm on weekends and our web site has been amended accordingly. This decision to change our hours has been brought about through insufficient demand for Customer Services out of these hours, a fact brought about we believe because of our continuing commitment to excellence service."

"We would like to apologise to Mr Manson and stress that this experience is not typical of the service the majority of our customers enjoy. Our own customer service questionnaires, which we despatch with every order, confirm that 95% of our customers would recommend a friend to buy from jungle.com."

is certainly a good magazine and one for my future purchase.

Tony Sweetman

We're glad you liked the software, Tony. Congrats on an interesting family site, which also gets a mention in this readers' sites section on page 19. Why not try using the 3D Graphics software on this month's CD that's explained in the book to further enhance your pages?

Gimme free Net access

I've just entered the world of contract IT and started a one man IT company. However, I've run in to a big problem and that's my phone bill. I need a new ISP because my last bill was about £500 through UK Online (www.ukonline.co.uk).



That's just part of it. What I'm looking for is an ISP that I can pay just one sum that will give me full access to the internet for a single or annual payment that most importantly covers the cost of calls, any time; off peak; peak; day; night; and all weekend.

Alternatively, a low monthly rate with a flat rate charge of about a penny a minute would be good. I'm sure I'm not the only one in this boat. I hope you can point me and others in the right direction.

James Andrews

For round-the-clock freephone Internet access we'd suggest you look at 24-7 Freecall (www.24-7freecall.net) which charges £19.99/month. If you want to pay less, have a look at off-peak unmetered service Claranet (www.claranet.net).

FREE LEGAL ADVICE

LEGAL AID

RICHARD COHEN, CO-FOUNDER OF THE DESKTOP LAWYER (WWW.DESKTOPLAWYER.NET), ANSWERS YOUR INTERNET LEGAL QUESTIONS

Email us at watchdog@paragon.co.uk with the subject 'Legal Aid' and we will forward your questions on to Richard



Reproducing images

I would like to reproduce images of compact disc covers for an eCommerce site I am creating so shoppers can see what they are buying. I realise this would probably infringe copyright or reproduction laws but it is a very daunting task to ask permission from every record company concerned - there are hundreds.

Is there a central register, or some such organisation, to pay for global permission to reproduce copyrighted images such as these? This is my first stab at developing an eCommerce site and I don't want to end up in court due to ignorance.

Jamie Gletcherow

A vast range of artistic, literary, and technical materials has copyright

conferred automatically. There is no legal requirement to register them with any statutory authority. Any unauthorised copying is an infringement.

The use of the '©' followed by the name of the copyright owner and the first year of publication acts to warn-off any possible transgressors.

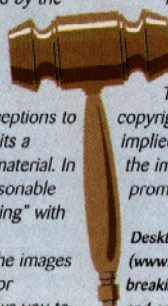
There are a number of exceptions to this rule. Public interest permits a reasonable use of copyright material. In deciding what constitutes reasonable use you must adopt "fair dealing" with the copyright material.

You intend to reproduce the images on the compact disc covers for eCommerce. Fair dealing allows you to quote copyrighted work as part of a review but you must identify the

source. There are layers of rights owners including trademark of the band, record label trademark, design copyright and printers' copyright. Your copying of the images is part of your

review of the product available and you will be fully identifying the owner of the copyright by reference to the compact disc. Thus, you will not be infringing copyright. In addition, there is an implied licence for the reproduction of the images for the purposes of promoting a sale.

Desktop Lawyer (www.desktoplawyer.net), the ground breaking legal service, allows the quick and easy download of "intelligent" legal documents via the Internet at a fraction of the price of traditional methods.



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Searching



You'll find online searching software on this month's Practical Internet CD-ROM

The only route from you to undiscovered information on the Web is the search engine. **Steve Patient** pits ten top contenders against each other in his aim to find the ultimate search facility

Net content company BrightPlanet estimates the Web contains 500 billion Web pages. The NEC Research Centre says it's growing at 1.5 million pages per day. It's a monster. Search engines use Web crawlers to follow links and index as many of these pages as possible but site visits can be a month or more apart and even the biggest, Google, indexes less than one billion Web pages. With such large numbers, using the right search engine – and using it effectively – is essential if you hope to reach the pages you need. However, even search engines have limitations.

For a start, they can't index Web accessible document databases, which BrightPlanet estimates contain 500 times more data than the Web itself. Similarly, most crawlers won't index sites which create pages dynamically, .asp pages for example, because such pages often lack a fixed URL. As a result, many major sites are unindexed or the indexing is useless.

Even so, search engines are the best we have and hundreds of sites employ dozens of search engines. Inktomi's, for example is extremely popular. And then there are specialist search sites.

This article concentrates on large, general purpose search sites, looking at how they work and what they can do for you. But it's always worth remembering that search engines are only a partial solution to navigating the Web.

1. YAHOO!

www.yahoo.co.uk

YAHOO! STARTED AS a hand-built Web site catalogue, which remains its main claim to fame. It also indexes Usenet groups and has a standard Web search feature. The default Web and catalogue search is provided by Google.

Yahoo!'s strength is the editorial control it maintains over its catalogue content,

which is of a consistently high quality. A Yahoo! search only looks at its index, which means you get no sex sites, school children's test sites or other such irrelevancies if you don't want them. The success of this approach is shown by Yahoo!'s popularity. It's the first choice for more people than any other search site. A number of localised Yahoo!'s exist including a UK specific version. Local versions index only locally



based sites but can also search worldwide. Yahoo! defaults to ANDing search terms, though you can change this to OR on the Advanced search page. By default it also uses your search terms as word roots (stemming), so if you enter 'miss' it would return hits on 'missile' as well as 'mississippi' – at the end of a long list of Miss xxxxx sites.

Our primary test search using the keywords 'crococsmia national collection'

turned up Dave Fenwick's Plymouth garden in fourth place. If you're looking for a good site on a specific subject or theme, Yahoo! is the best starting point. If you're searching for obscure information – we tried copal (a resin from tropical trees used in laquers) – Yahoo! is just as good. 'Copal AND amber' found only relevant links.

Overall, Yahoo! proved strong on site quality and is a great starting point.

THE VERDICT

Hits:

High quality sites with few irrelevant links. An ideal starting point

Misses:

Only a small part of the Web is indexed, poor on obscure content

Overall

8 / 10

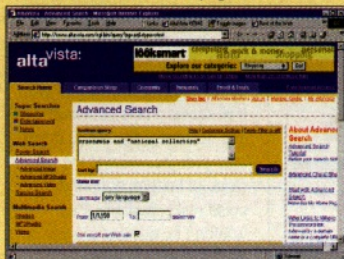
showdown!

2. ALTA VISTA

<http://uk.altavista.com>

ORIGINALLY FOUNDED BY Dec to showcase its high-end Alpha 8400 servers, Alta Vista is now owned by CMGI. It is crawler based with automatic indexing and no editorial oversight – it grabs everything.

Alta Vista has one of the largest Web indexes at 350 million pages and some of the best advanced search features. It supports Boolean operators AND, NOT, OR and NEAR as well as required and prohibited words (prepend them with + or -), exact phrase search with double speech marks, it honours capitalisation and supports wildcards. So you can construct precise searches of the form: ("groucho marx" OR "harpo



marx") AND "Duck Soup" AND NOT Karl

You can search on fields including page titles or specific domains for example as well as specifying the document dates between which you want to search and ask for just one result per site. One of the neatest features is the 'translate' option for non-English Web sites – which works well.

Alta Vista also supports a surprisingly good visual image search engine, MP3 and audio as well as a video search. It's recently launched Raging, a customisable search interface to Alta Vista. The search for copal and laquer produced six hits of which the third, fifth and sixth actually mentioned it while two links were dead and one was off topic.

In general, Alta Vista's huge index and precise search criteria make it a great choice.

THE VERDICT

Hits:

Advanced search produces short, precise hit lists and image searching is neat

Misses:

Simple searches can produce long lists of irrelevant results. Dead links are common

Overall

8 / 10

3. ASK JEEVES

www.ask.co.uk

ASK JEEVES IS a knowledge base compiled by humans that enables you to ask natural language questions. It then points you at a short list of highly relevant, polished sites – or so says the blurb.

We asked, 'Where can I find the national collection of crocosmias' and AskJeeves gave us three 'relevant' sites. They were all CollectingNation, an auction site. The first was for Pokémon – did we mention Pokémon? The other two were CollectingNation help pages. Not a plant in sight. Interestingly, 'What is Copal' did locate a site selling copal containing embedded insects.

Basically, Ask Jeeves doesn't know enough and tends to produce nothing or nonsense. Even worse, the results are skewed as Ask Jeeves sells placings on its results list. Anyone can 'sponsor' a search term, which basically means their site will appear at the top of any search

using the sponsored word, regardless of how much better or more relevant another site might be.

Weirder yet is the Kids section of Ask Jeeves. We tried the same question on Crocosmias. We were referred to pages located by Ask Jeeves 'meta-partner'

Yahooligans. One was a Brad Pitt fan site. He doesn't appear to be interested in South African flowers. There was nothing relevant on the page about Pixies either.

The metasearch feature, using AltaVista and Excite, found the answers we wanted. This begs the question, 'Why am I asking Ask Jeeves?'



THE VERDICT

Hits:

You can query it using natural English sentences

Misses:

Extremely limited database, commercially skewed results and a tendency to reply with rubbish

Overall

3 / 10

4. DEJA.COM

www.deja.com

DEJA STARTED OUT as a searchable newsgroup archive called Deja News but it's metamorphosed into a shopping site with the newsgroup archive taking a back seat.

You search the Usenet archive for messages containing keywords (AND is the default Boolean operator), from particular authors, by date or by newsgroup. The busiest sections – jobs and adult – are separated out so you don't have to include them in a full search. The Deja Usenet search is available from a variety of other search sites, including Alta Vista.

While there is a lot of good information stored on Deja, the nature of newsgroups reduces its usefulness. This is because no-one posts to a newsgroup with



archiving in mind. Information is therefore often incomplete because a lot of rubbish is spoken in newsgroups; because replies are usually too specific and, more seriously, because newsgroups aren't as popular with the new generation of Net users as with the original users.

In our tests, Deja failed to find any references to postings with the keywords

'Crocosmia National Collection' and the single word 'copal' produced only references to a specific camera shutter mounting. You can still use Deja Classic, providing a view of discussion threads. There's also a standard Web search option supplied by Northern Light – though you get only the most basic search features via Deja.

Where Deja scores is in computer and Net-related information. However, it is really past its sell-by date and can only get less useful.

THE VERDICT

Hits:

Fast access to billions of Usenet postings

Misses:

A limited range of unreliable information with a poor signal to noise ratio

Overall

2 / 10

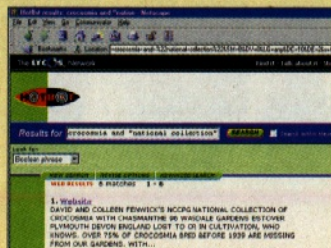
5. HOTBOT

www.hotbot.com

HOTBOT WAS A fairly late entry into the search engine field. It's now owned by Lycos, an early search engine innovator. In fact, the Hotbot URL above takes you to <http://hotbot.lycos.com>.

Hotbot is powered by Inktomi (along with around 90 other search sites) but while Inktomi ensures efficient searching, it doesn't mean a large index is being searched. Hotbot claims around 110 million indexed pages but is still effective.

Hotbot enables you to perform most of Alta Vista's search tricks: Booleans AND, OR, NOT, phrases, dates, page titles, domains and word stemming. It also assumes AND for simple keyword searches.



Hotbot enables you to specify pages which only contain an image, sound, video and/or JavaScript.

In our tests, Hotbot put the Crocosmia National Collection site at the top of the listings, with only six other hits, four relevant. It produced a site for copal gum as the second item on the first results page. This is impressive. It also provides a link to the Lycos search engine at the bottom of each result list. This is funny.

HotBot includes a directory, though it's poor compared with Yahoo!. It didn't work in Netscape and only searches on page titles.

For straightforward information searches, Hotbot is fast with a clean and simple-to-use interface, but the fact that it indexes such a small percentage of the sites on the Web mean it may not find more obscure material.

THE VERDICT

Hits:

Fast, clean and effective with the tools you need for precise searches

Misses:

The relatively small index is slightly worrying and the category listing is poor

Overall

7/10

6. GO.COM

www.go.com

GO IS THE NEW name for Infoseek, which now runs the Inktomi search engine. Naturally, this makes it rather similar to the other Inktomi based search engines. It has the same index and supports basically the same set of search criteria.

The search interface is less sophisticated than HotBot's. The simple search defaults to OR and produces far too many results (29 million) on our first test. The advanced search is under Search Options and provides more control, but still not as much as HotBot. Its syntax is unusual, too.

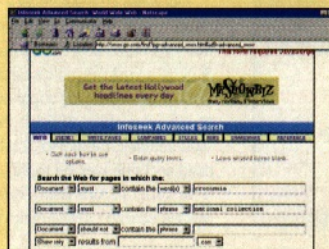
Whereas on Alta Vista or HotBot you could type: *crococsmia* AND "national collection" on Go you type: *+crococsmia, +"national collection"*. Being different just for the sake of it seems pointless.

Go returned basically the same results as HotBot, but it isn't as easy to use. Perhaps one reason for visiting Go is its image collection – though no Alta Vista style image

search is available. You can also download Express Search, a browser plug-in which submits searches to multiple search engines.

The Search tab on the site takes you to a directory of reviewed sites, which isn't particularly comprehensive and isn't searchable. It's hard to see why you'd bother with this when you're only a click away from Yahoo!.

We feel Infoseek was much better before it turned into Go. It all seems a little confused and determined to dumb down your searches despite the range of Inktomi options it could make available. This wouldn't be our first choice for an entry point to Inktomi's search facilities.



THE VERDICT

Hits:

Runs on the impressive Inktomi search engine. Has an image archive

Misses:

Not enough search options and the directory is poor

Overall

5/10

7. EXCITE

www.excite.co.uk

EXCITE APPEARS TO be desperate to shift from search engine to portal site. It's a traditional crawl and index search engine which claims to have 250 million pages on file.

The advanced search syntax isn't documented (well we couldn't find it) but in practice it appears to support most of the Alta Vista syntax including



speech marks for phrases, Booleans, + and – for required and prohibited words and so on.

The advanced features are normally accessed from a forms page, but searching on dates isn't supported and neither is the use of stem words (miss only finds miss, not misses).

If you're using it in simple search mode with just a bunch of keywords, it's worth noting that Excite defaults to OR, not AND. What this means is you either need to prepend each term with + or use the advanced form page to

ensure you only get pages containing all the keywords.

Excite actually performed extremely well in our tests, putting the *crococsmia* site we were after at the top of the list. On the downside, though, the results listings are overly long and you can't restrict results to one per domain – so expect lots of repeats.

An excellent feature is the searchable photo library (with a claimed 750,000 images) which supplies thumbnails. The photo search is fast as well as efficient and, unlike Alta Vista's, where the image may have gone missing in the interim, Excite's are always there. The category search also works well.

Overall, Excite lived up to its name, though considering the size and power of the search engine we would have liked to see a little more documentation on using it effectively – especially the advanced syntax.

THE VERDICT

Hits:

Huge index and a good range of search modifiers. Excellent photo search

Misses:

Not enough information on using the search features

Overall

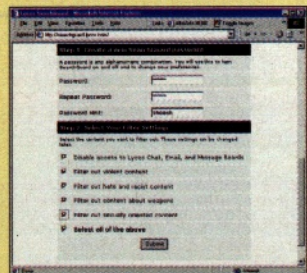
7/10

8. LYCOS

www.lycos.co.uk

LYCOS OWNS HOTBOT which uses Inktomi but though Lycos pioneered with its own search engine, it now uses one from FAST (<http://alltheweb.com>). FAST claims the second largest Web index at 340 million pages.

As with so many search engines, Lycos includes password protected



parental controls to censor the Web. This works in two steps. First it filters out certain keywords and then it filters the results, though again it doesn't give any details of its modus operandi. You can choose to filter any sex, hate, gun and racist content but you can't add sites to filter or add categories.

There's the usual simple and advanced search options but the advanced page is form based and doesn't enable you to use words and phrases together in the same query line.

More annoyingly, it doesn't offer the NOT Boolean, and though it's true you

can replace it with the minus sign, it's an unnecessary inconsistency. It also tries to confuse search issues by slipping two buying searches into the radio button list of searchable content.

However, Lycos also appears to support the same syntax as Alta Vista and, using this on the simple search page, we were able to fine-tune our queries to a far greater extent than with the advanced form.

Lycos returns two sets of results. The first is suspiciously similar to Ask Jeeves and is labelled 'Popular' – and in our tests these were totally and completely wrong. It was the same set of CollectingNation links. The second set is labelled 'Web sites' (which begs the question, 'What were we searching to produce the first set of results?') and all three results returned were spot on.

Having changed to the FAST engine Lycos deserves a higher profile than it currently has. It's good.

THE VERDICT

Hits:	
A large index with quick responses and a good range of search syntax	
Misses:	
The search features are underdocumented and the search form is restrictive	
Overall	8 / 10

JARCON BUSTER

?

Index

The collection of information held by a search engine on the pages it's examined. Not all sites that use search engines access all the index. For speed, they often use subsets of the index. This is especially true of those using Inktomi.

?

Authoritative

A term used in search engine circles to describe a site to which a lot of other sites link. The idea is that more links means more informed people rated it highly.

?

Translate

Many search engines offer a translate function on non-English pages. This is hardly an exact science but usually produces comprehensible information.

?

Domain

The address of a site. Restricting searches to one hit per domain – as distinct from one hit per site – can sometimes backfire. For example, all sites hosted by Xoom are on the Xoom domain.



9. NORTHERN LIGHT

www.northernlight.com

NORTHERN LIGHT IS one of the larger search engines with around 265 million pages indexed. It offers 'natural language' searches as well as keyword, Boolean, phrase and form-based searches. Unusually, you can use an asterisk at the end or within words for wildcard matches or use the percentage sign to replace a single letter for searching on commonly misspelled words.

As well as the usual fields, Northern Light supports news searches (not newsgroups, real news). Check the Help page for all the options. Northern Light supplies a range of specialised business search forms.

Northern Light is heavily biased toward business interests, stocks and shares, business news and similar material. Its searchable Special Collection is touted as an 'online business library comprising 6,900 trusted, full-text journals, books, magazines,

newswires, and reference sources'. However, while it will show you Special Collection document summaries there's a charge to read them. Basically, you need a Northern Light account to get the most from it.

As a straightforward Web search engine Northern Light is excellent, and for a serious business user or investor the ability to quickly find and read relevant information could be priceless. In our tests, Northern Light did as well as the best of the rest. We preferred to use the search syntax rather than the form-based power search, though the latter does include tick boxes to limit the search to specific subject areas or document types. All in all, Northern Light is highly recommended.



THE VERDICT

Hits:	
Well targeted for its business oriented customers, large index	
Misses:	
Some of the best information sources are only available to members for money	
Overall	7 / 10

10. MIRAGO

www.mirago.co.uk

LIMITING A SEARCH engine geographically seems contrary to what the Web is all about. Yet this is what Mirago has been designed to do. Mirago argues the results it returns are more relevant to UK residents. On the other hand, it only indexes a few 'relevant' pages, effectively excluding information on most of the world's Web sites.

Mirago accepts natural language as well as structured queries. It supports phrases as well as Booleans with extras, such as PLUS.

To search, Mirago first 'normalises' words; taking them back to stems, to singulars, expanding abbreviations and so on. This means more and perhaps better results. However, it does this to words within phrases, which means you can't search on an exact phrase.

Naturally, Mirago is a UK portal, where UK-centric links make sense, but when we tried

information searches, Mirago's inclusion criteria began showing its limitations. It didn't find our Crocosmia National Collection site despite it being a UK domain.

You're at the mercy of Mirago editorial decisions. For example, a search for Sailor Moon anime gave a French language site in number one position, but PlayKiss, another Japanese-dominated hobby, produced no hits. Similarly, while US news and comment site Suck Daily is in Mirago's index, the news and comment site at The Salon isn't.

The Mirago search engine exists primarily as an advertisement for its search technology, so perhaps the limitations are designed to reduce running costs. Unfortunately, they dramatically reduce its usefulness as a gateway to Web-based information.



THE VERDICT

Hits:	
Powerful set of query operators	
Misses:	
Excludes most of the Web making it the last choice for an information search	
Overall	3 / 10

Smarter, faster searching

Which search engine you choose to favour depends to a large extent on what you want. For example, Google-based sites provide results ranked according to the number of incoming links – authoritative sites people choose to link to.

For obscure or unusual information, you want a search engine with the largest possible database of sites, so Google or FAST-based sites (Yahoo! and Lycos respectively) are the best bets with Northern Light and Alta Vista close behind. To find a good site on a specific subject, Yahoo!'s catalogue wins hands down. It deserves its position as the number one starting point for Web navigation.

There's also the question of how you search. Search engines are tools, and like other tools you have to learn to use them effectively. No matter how good the search engine, a poorly constructed search query or poorly chosen keywords or phrases will render it useless.

When constructing queries a powerful search syntax is as important as a large index. Our own favourite combination of index size and search syntax is provided by Alta Vista, closely followed by Lycos and Northern Light.

Massively disappointing are Deja, AskJeeves and Mirago. Any of the general search engines we looked at comfortably outperform them. In fact they're so bad, using them skews your view of the Web making it appear a lot less useful and interesting than it is.

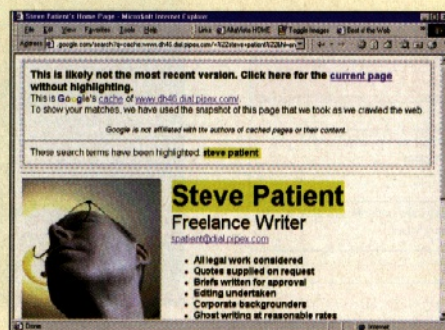
But what you want to know is which search engine is best. This is hard to answer. In practice, it depends on what you're looking to find. A business user would do far better using Northern Light's Special Collection than Yahoo!'s business and commerce catalogue. Someone looking for a good

site discussing women's issues in the third world would do better on Yahoo! than with Alta Vista – they'd be looking originally for a subject, not information on it.

Still, this series of tests has changed our thinking. While Alta Vista – especially its Raging Search interface – will always be our first love, Google is the best of the bunch.

Okay, we didn't test www.google.com as it wasn't on the editor's list but we did test Yahoo!'s interface to it – and were seriously impressed. Effectively, Yahoo! now combines the two best Web navigation tools on the planet – its catalogue and Google.

In practice, we prefer to use Google from its native interface at www.google.com. This is simple, clean and blisteringly fast. Google's combination of massive index, incoming link rating and the fact that it saves a copy of every page it indexes (so you can see it even if the original site has gone) makes it a hands down winner. □



Google caches every page it visits which means you can view it even if it isn't there anymore, or just view it fast. It modifies the page to tell you it's a copy

JARGON BUSTER



Booleans

Logical operators such as AND, OR, NOT used to fine-tune queries. Interestingly, your processor uses the same operators to do its work.



Stem

The basic form of a word, so 'going', 'gone' and 'goes' will all be reduced to 'go'. Also sometimes used to describe the reverse process where 'go' will list pages with any word beginning with go.



Phrase

A group of words usually identified in a query by being enclosed in double speech marks, for example, "The good, the bad and the ugly".



Syntax

The word means, 'A grammatical structure' and applies to any language, including the ones used to query a search engine.



Field

Many search engines enable you to specify only pages from a specific domain, date, with a particular title, containing references to certain file types and so on.



Database

Much of the information on the Net is only stored in various proprietary databases, many of which have Web interfaces. These can't be indexed by search engines, only queried directly.

SEARCH ENGINES HEAD TO HEAD

FOR EXPLANATION OF TERMS, SEE JARGON BUSTER ABOVE

	Yahoo!	Alta Vista	Ask Jeeves	Deja.com	HotBot	Go.com	Excite	Lycos	Mirago	Northern Light
Boolean	AO	AON	n/a	no	AON	menu	AO	AON	AON+	AON
Phrases	yes	yes	no	no	yes	menu	yes	yes	yes	yes
And/ Or	AND	AND	n/a	AND	AND	OR	OR	AND	OR	AND
Fields	yes	yes	no	no	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
Require +/-	yes	yes	no	no	yes	menu	yes	yes	yes	yes
Stem	*	*	no	no	*	no	no	no	yes	*
Date	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	no	no	no	yes	yes
Proximity	no	NEAR	no	no	no	no	no	NEAR	NEAR	no
Usenet	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no
Director	yes	yes	no	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
M'media	n/a	IAV	no	no	IAV	IAV	IAV	IAV	IAV	IAV
Censors	no	yes	yes	no	no	yes	no	yes	yes	no



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face facts

online consumers will never look the same again. are you ready?



BID FOR BARGAINS

If the word 'auction' conjures up images of rich aristocrats snapping up Van Goghs, it's about time you looked at online auctions. **Robin Lewis** explains how to bid for online bargains



A range of auction software is on the Practical Internet CD

Conventional auctions are notoriously confusing; items tend to be either hideously over-priced or the kind of stuff you would find in a car boot sale. Make one false twitch and you can find yourself walking away with a Ming vase.

Online auctions are beginning to bridge the gap between these extremes and are places where you

can actually buy some good stuff. In truth, auction sites are better described as trading communities where people can put up interesting items for sale, along with selected items from the site itself and from retailers from other areas.

QXL (www.qxl.com) is a good example. The site has an estimated 680,000 users across Europe and despite the obvious difficulties of

HOW TO BID AND BUY ONLINE USING QXL

09.08.2000

Registration

Welcome to QXL. Registration is free and fast. We keep all your personal details confidential. Join now and start bidding and selling. [Registered charities click here.](#)

Four Fields:

Please note: You must fill in every entry marked with *

You must be 18 years of age or older to register with QXL.com

*First Name:

*Last Name:

Billing Address:

*Line 1:

*Line 2:

*City:

*Country/State:

Credit Card Details

If you wish to sell, bid on any auction, as well as take advantage of all of our other services please fill in the credit card details below. If you only wish to bid on selected auctions you do not need to fill in your credit card details, some sellers, including QXL Direct, require buyers to have credit cards for security reasons.

If you do not wish to enter your card details, go to the bottom of the form and click submit.

Please fill in your name as it appears on your credit card:

Please select your credit card type:

Please enter your credit card number:

Note for Switch and Solo cardholders: Enter the large number across the card containing between 14 and 15 digits. Do not enter the smaller numbers at the bottom centre.

QXL Customer services, 12:25 pm +0100, Re: Congratulations and Welcome to QXL

To: QXL Customer services - info@qxl.com
From: Brian Lewis - brian@qxl.com
Subject: Re: Congratulations and Welcome to QXL

Hi,
Welcome to QXL!

You have been registered as a new member with the following info:

- Member ID: 8113878
- Use this name to login
- Password: *****

Go to <http://www.qxl.com/go-to-my-home.asp?EQLC=61127> (This can be amended by going to Modify My Account)

Membership number: 8113878

Use this number if you need to contact Customer Services. Please don't login with this number!

You'll need your QXL Member ID and password each time you need to bid or login to the QXL site. Please take a moment to print or write down these details, and keep them in a safe place.

1 Go to QXL (www.qxl.com). To buy, you have to register first. This entails inputting your email, telephone, postal address, and a username that hasn't already been taken. There's a lot of information to fill in here, so make sure you input all the right information or you won't be able to proceed.

2 Even though you haven't bought anything yet, you still have to input your credit card details. This is because bidding for something is a legally binding agreement. It's standard practice, so don't worry about it too much – just don't develop a nervous click!

3 Once this is done, your password will be emailed to you. Take a note of it by writing it down and keeping it in a safe place. Guard it well, as this username will give you access to QXL auction sites all over the world. It also gives you the right to bid for just about anything!

online auctions

Killer bargains Best finds

Looking for something?

Advanced search Search tips

FROM £1 NO RESERVE

Great selection of the 1997 vintage John Armit

Browse our Categories:

Arts & Collectibles
Cars & Transport
Computing
Electronics & Cameras
Good Causes

Home & Garden
Music, Movies & Sport & Fitness
The Travel Shop
Wembley
More...

Featured Auctions

Auction Search Results

No.	Status	Auction ID	Qty	No. Bids
1		7518835	1	0
		GOLF CLUBS		
2		7610424	1	6
		Taylor Made - Full Set of Golf Clubs		
3		7659757	5	0
		** TOP BARGAIN ** FULL SET DOWNGOLF CLUBS (INC. PUTTER) ** TOP		

Shafte

Current bid: £125

Full Description

Seller: Chris Borsell

Images are for illustrative purposes only. Click for full size image.

The Reserve Price has not been met for all of the items listed.

Auction Status

Current bid (per item): £125 (Ind. VAT where applicable)

Bid Increment: £5

Quantity Available: 1

Minimum Quantity: 1

Your bid:

Bid limit:

Quantity:

Accept less quantity? ☐

4 Now you're logged on, you need to find what you're looking for. This is the fun bit – just type in what you're after and QXL will find it for you. Alternatively, have a look at the Editor's Choice, the Hot Deals, or the general categories to find interesting bits and pieces. We've inputted a search string for golf clubs...

5 ...and it's taken us here to a page of clubs on offer. The various symbols mean different things – the camera indicates that there's a picture, for instance. We're checking out the Titanium golf clubs and bag – just click on the link to enter the bidding stage.

6 This is the page where you bid. Once you've decided what you want, click 'Place bid'. Choose your reserve price here if you have an upper limit to your spending – if not just place a bid and you'll be notified by email if you've won. You'll have to check back at the site to see how the bidding's going.

cross-currency commerce, allows trade to happen between individual users in all of the major European countries.

ebay, which has 127,000 users in this country and a staggering 15.8 million users worldwide, is QXL's main competitor. ebay UK (www.ebay.co.uk) was recently launched in a blaze of non-publicity and despite the lack of advertising, has done extremely well. ebay has a policy of "minimum maintenance", meaning the site is allowed to grow organically without too much interference from the site managers. This, unfortunately, means that the price and quality of items varies immensely.

What's out there?

Traditional auction houses like Sotheby's and Christie's do have facilities for online auctions but don't have facilities for trading goods. This means, of course, that the items for sale are as reputable as the site itself. Sotheby's has a very accessible site at www.sothebys.com, but found that the stereotype of the expensive auction house was putting customers off. So it put together a deal with Amazon and came up with a joint site at www.sothebys.amazon.com, which recently sold the *Spitting Image* puppets. Jackie Coulter is the Senior Director for the Internet division at

Sotheby's: "Over 80 per cent of people on the site are new users. Historically people have found it off-putting to go into an auction house. The Internet makes it comfortable for people."

"One of our main reasons for joining with Amazon is that in the eCommerce world it has the biggest and brightest reputation – and we have one of the biggest brands for auctions and antiques worldwide as well. It seemed like a pretty good combination."

Sotheby's has also introduced a 'going going gone' period to prevent what's becoming known as 'bid sniping'. This occurs when a bidder comes



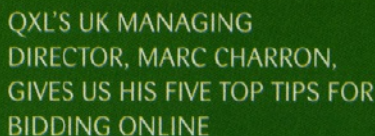
in very late, bidding just over the price – meaning that no-one has the chance to come back with a better offer. Sotheby's has incorporated a time-extension of ten minutes to allow others to come in.

Yahoo!, another major player among the .coms, has also come up with an auction site of its own at <http://auctions.yahoo.com/uk>. It's a trading site like QXL, ebay, eurobid (www.eurobid.com), ebid (www.ebid.co.uk) and Boxlot (www.boxlot.com). Qualitatively different from traditional auction houses, these tend to use a combination of both items auctioned themselves and traded goods from site users, with differing results. QXL's sell-off of Wembley (*Practical Internet* 44) is proving to be a great success. Started by that Wembley legend Geoff Hurst, the auction aims to sell all of the famous stadium off piece by piece. QXL's UK Managing Director Marc Charron told us: "It's obviously been great for us but there's a lot of responsibility and a lot of trust. Wembley is so meaningful to so many people. It's the kind of thing that is relevant to everybody, and it couldn't happen without an online auction."

"It's the inspiration for people to give online auctions a try." It also happens to be an excellent example of how to raise the respectability of online auctions.



BUYING AT AUCTION



1. Ensure you use a secure, reputable auction site, as you're going to have to give your credit details to participate.
2. Be absolutely sure that you are buying what you think you are. Navigate the site fully to find exactly what you want.
3. Do your homework. Research prices before bidding and know what you can afford. That way you're not going to pay over the odds or go over your limits!
4. Pay attention to additional costs that may be incurred such as insurance and delivery.
5. Know who you are buying from. Some items may be second-hand, from a merchant partner, from the site itself or from an individual. Buying from an individual is effectively an unknown quantity. If it goes well and you have a successful auction from a private seller, give them a 'member rating' – this is a way of providing feedback on customer performance.

Sometimes you'll find some unusual products. In May, Texas prisoner Michael Toney attempted to sell tickets for his own execution via ebay.

Arguing that "I am on death row for a crime I did not commit", Toney tried to raise money to fund an appeal or leave something for his family by offering front row seats to his lethal injection for \$100 each.

It did get on to the site thanks to a friend of Toney's but was subsequently removed. A spokesperson for ebay said: "Clearly we don't want an item like this on ebay. The bottom line is, he doesn't have a right to do this."

A bizarre example, but it illustrates the problem with any free trading site – the quality of sellers. There's a way of combating this problem by utilising the 'feedback forum'.

SELL IT LIKE IT IS - AUCTION AN ITEM AT EBAY

1 Go to www.ebay.co.uk. You will have to register before ebay will allow you to flag anything up on the site. You'll have to enter your credit card details again. There's a flat fee of 15p for inserting an item into the auction but apart from that, you won't be charged unless you specify extra services.

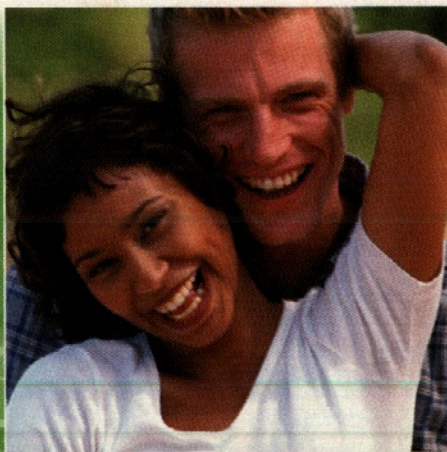
3 Go to the 'Sell' section of the site, and choose the category you want your item to be included in. Important, this, as it determines whether or not your item will be found easily or not. We're going to try and sell a piece of A4 paper, and there's nothing else that covers this so we're clicking on 'Everything Else'.

5 Now come the selling details. Make sure all the required fields are filled in, and be careful what you specify as some extra services will incur a charge. If you're selling something embarrassing, it might be better to choose the private auction facility, specify how much you have to sell, and click on 'Review'.

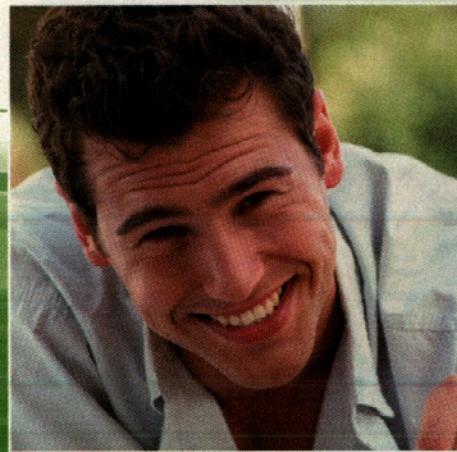
2 Once you've inputted all your details (we'll leave the tedium of that page to your imagination), you then have to read the Terms and Conditions. Again, these are pretty standard – but do read them otherwise you won't know where you stand if anything goes wrong.

4 This is the place where you need to input the details of the item you're going to sell. This is the time to input that password that should have been emailed to you, and your user ID which you will have chosen at Step 1. We've doodled on our piece of A4 paper, so this is worth a mention in the description.

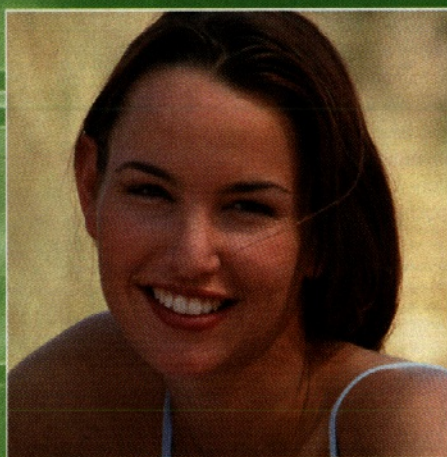
6 Now you'll be given a chance to check your details are correct. If you've missed any fields you'll be told to go back, and there's an automatic insertion fee of 15p to log the item on to the site. If you're happy with the selection, click on 'Submit My Listing', which is the final stage of the process.



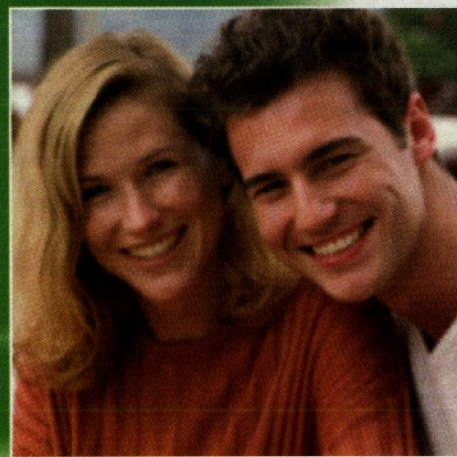
“ Your matching was right on! We were the number one match for each other on udate and it seems in real life too. ”



“ I have been with udate for less than a month and already have too many women to write to and meet. ”



“ I'm happy to tell you I have met the man of my dreams. ”



“ Thank you udate for helping to make this happen... I have met my soulmate after searching for years. ”

(they just clicked)

It's easy to make friends or build relationships with udate. Our sophisticated matching system and extensive membership database provides more choice, more places, more fun. And because you have total 'on-line' control, you can build the relationship you want at your own pace. To find out more go to www.udate.co.uk and click now.

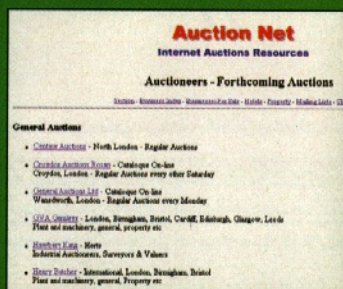
update.co.uk

The uk's largest global internet dating service



**COMING TO TAKE
YOU AWAY?**

Then you'll end up at the UK Bankruptcy and Insolvency Web site (www.insolvency.co.uk/auctions), an online list of offline auctions of goods that the bailiffs have got their hands on. It's a frightening place for anyone with an overdraft, but if you're feeling particularly heartless, there are details about lots of bankruptcy and insolvency auctions around the country.



↳ whereby previous buyers can leave comments about the sellers they have interacted with on previous occasions. Ebay and other sites also insure the items on sale and have teams on the look-out for bad traders, but this never completely eliminates the risk factor inherent in buying from someone you have no knowledge of.

That said, reputable sites will allow you to trade in safety with minimum interference. Get it right, and auctioneering can be a lot of fun. □

Have you ever used the Internet to buy yourself, a friend or a relative something from an auction? Maybe you've sold something. If so contact us at pl@paragon.co.uk - we'd like to hear all about it.

JARGON BUSTER

An optional feature that allows a bidder to set the highest price they're willing to pay for an item. The Web site will then bid for you up to that price; unless you increase the limit, if the price of the item goes above it you'll be outbid.

A message board on an auction site which allows buyers to read comments about the sellers of items on the site. The feedback forum ensures that buyers can be relatively confident that a seller won't fail to supply the item on sale.

Reserve Price
The lowest price at which a seller is willing to sell his or her item.

Confusingly not the same as the reserve price, the start price is the price the seller starts the auction at. Sometimes this is the same as the reserve price, sometimes it's much less – though what the point of advertising an item at a price the seller is not willing to sell at is beyond us.

SELLING AT AUCTION



JENNIFER MOWAT IS THE MANAGER OF EBAY UK. SHE OFFERED US HER FIVE TOP TIPS FOR BETTER SELLING...

1. Give clear and complete descriptions of the items for sale. Try to provide information in the description that may answer any questions that potential bidders would ask.
2. Users can also improve their chances for a successful transaction by scanning in a photograph or image of the item for sale. More and more eBay users are using clear and detailed photographs of the merchandise to help them sell their item.

3. It always helps to answer any email questions in a prompt and courteous manner. When communicating with bidders specify how the merchandise will be shipped and the estimated costs for shipping.

- 4. Bring attention to your item by listing it in the gallery – you can already put pictures into your item description for no extra charge.**

Each gallery listing shows a thumbnail picture of the item, plus other listing details.

5. A second seller tool that many of our users find helpful is called "Category Featured". Category Featured auctions appear at the top of listings pages for that category such as pottery and glass, dolls, computers, and are also selected on a random basis for display in the Featured Items section of related category home pages.



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*Free delivery to anywhere in mainland UK, Monday to Friday (1-4 working days for items in stock).

FLASH FORWARD

The Web standard for animation takes another step forward with the release of Flash 5. Clive Parker examines the makeover of Macromedia's flagship product

Program: Macromedia Flash 5

Company: Macromedia

URL: www.macromedia.com

Type of program: Web animation package

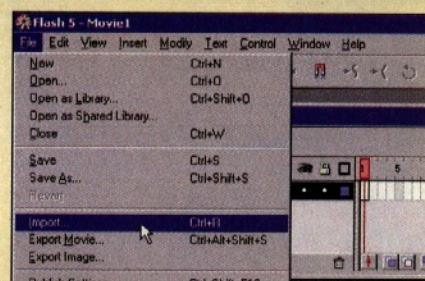
File size: 40Mb of disk space required

Cost: £99+VAT for upgrade from any previous version,

£179+VAT to upgrade to Flash 5 and Freehand 9

Contact: www.macromedia.com

IMPORTING FREEHAND IMAGES IN FLASH 5



1

Importing images

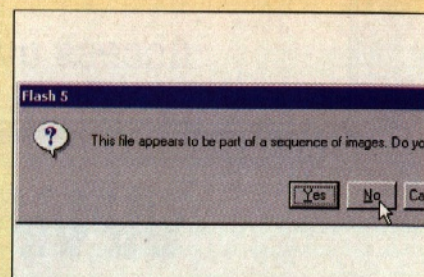
Flash has always been able to import images in various formats. Now it supports the import of Freehand images while maintaining the original layers. Go to the 'File' menu and select the 'Import' command.



2

Choosing the file

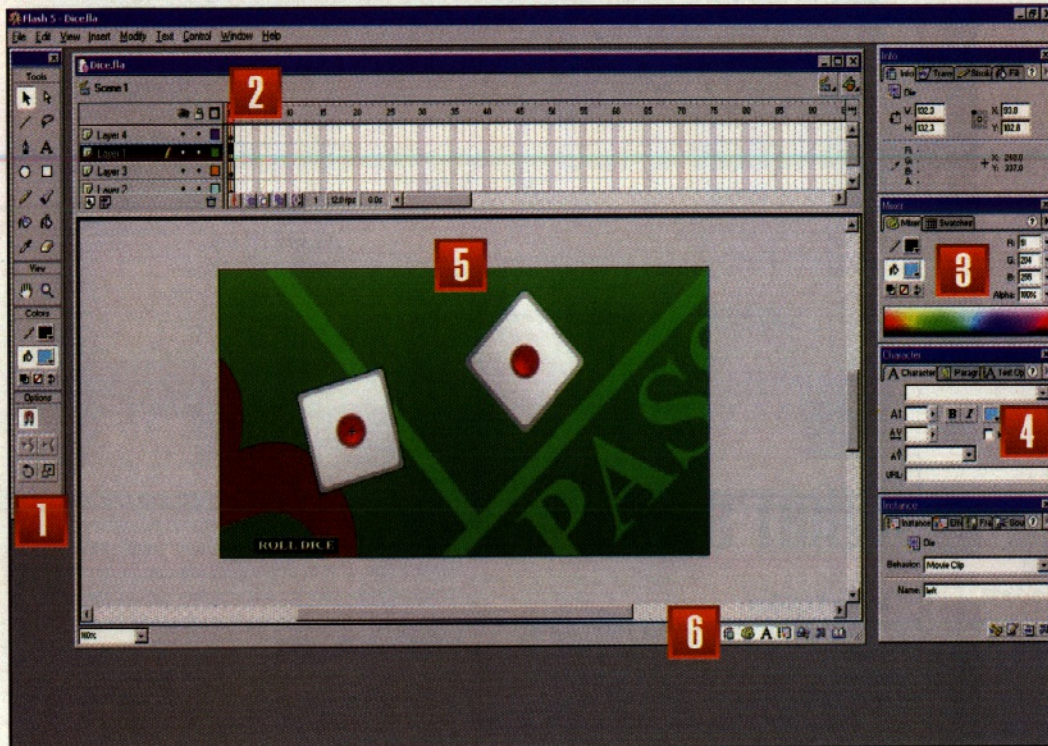
Using the standard Windows file selector box, browse your hard drive or a CD to find the Freehand file you want to import. We're importing an image from the Freehand 9 CD-ROM.



3

Using sequenced images

Sometimes you will encounter a dialog box like this when images have consecutive file names. If you just want to open a single image, click on the 'No' button.



1 The Toolbar

The Flash 5 toolbar is bigger and has more tools. In addition, each tool has many more options than in previous versions of Flash.

2 Layers and Timeline

These areas are almost exactly as they were before.

3 Floating Tool Panels

Similar in function to the floating palettes of other applications, these tool panels offer massive control over Flash movies.

4 Text Panels

A good selection of tool panels makes the text control simple and painless.

5 The Stage

As in other version of Flash, the stage sits in the centre of the screen.

6 Launcher Bar

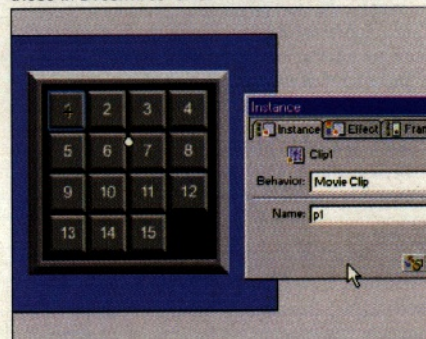
This addition to the stage window enables you to launch many items by clicking on their icons.

Back in the days when most Web sites were black text on a grey background, no-one had the faintest idea that the Web would become the feast of animation that it is today. Everywhere you turn, you find animation splash screens, intro pages and even navigation bars, maps and pages created using Macromedia's Flash format.

Macromedia has had to pull out all the stops with this upgrade, especially after the recent launch of Adobe's LiveMotion Web animation toolkit. It has risen to the challenge and produced a complete makeover of the Flash 5 development interface, with just the Flash Stage and the Flash Timeline retaining their original look and feel.

But that's not a bad thing. While longtime Flash users may be little put out that everything looks different, it's not really a problem because the new layout design is much easier to get to grips with

than the old systems. The biggest change regular Flash users will notice is with the Property Inspectors. They have transformed into fully fledged floating tool palettes in the same style as those in Dreamweaver 3.

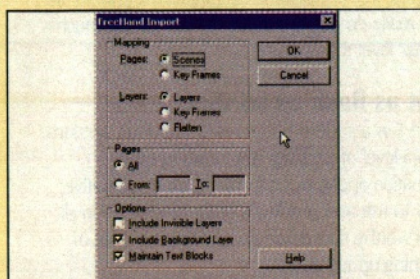


The Instance tool panel enables you to decide the behaviour and name of any instance within your animation with ease

Enhanced toolkits

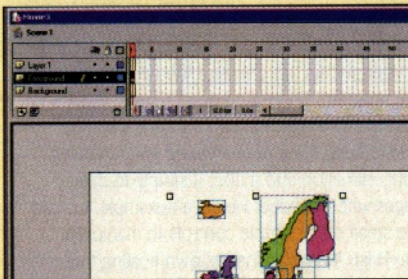
Each tab from the original Property Inspector in Flash 4 (Object, Frame, Transform, Scene) is a separate tool palette with two or more tabs to access the various tools. As with Dreamweaver 3, you can drag individual tabs off to create standalone tool palettes called Panels. In Dreamweaver, it's always handy to have the HTML Styles palette floating around somewhere near the main editing window. This makes it much easier to adjust individual elements of any object in your animation.

The main tool palette has been upgraded with many more tools on offer (such as a pen tool for creating paths). Each tool also has its own set of options associated with it. This means that you can select the Eraser tool, for instance, and define the size of the eraser but you can also define exactly what the tool will erase when you use it.



4 Importing Freehand images

When you are importing a Freehand image there are several parameters you can define. In the Freehand Import box, you can choose how you want to map your image.



5 It's imported

When the Freehand file is imported, you can manipulate it in exactly the same way as any native Flash 5 file. You can add effects and movement quickly and effectively.



6 Using other formats

Of course, Flash 5 can import all of the traditional file formats such as GIFs and JPEGs. You can use the Trace Bitmap command to convert bitmap images into Flash vector graphics.



On common ground

The new look and feel is called the Macromedia Common User Interface and it's designed to present a common interface across the Macromedia range of Web publishing tools. The key feature that you'll notice straight away is the Launcher Bar at the bottom of the Stage window, which gives customisable layout of application panels for better workflow and customisable keyboard shortcuts. The Bezier Pen tool works in exactly the same way as it does in Freehand 9 and Fireworks 3 and all colour selection tools are the same across the range.

Another big plus point for Flash 5 is the ability to import files directly from Freehand 7, 8 or 9 and work on them directly in Flash 5. You can import files by dragging and dropping, copying and pasting or by using the import commands. This enables you to map multipage Freehand documents to Flash scenes or individual keyframes, map Freehand layers to Flash layers, map Freehand frames to keyframes, map colours and fills and import Freehand symbols directly into the Flash Library.

JARGON BUSTER

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Bezier tools

The new Bezier Pen tool and the Sub-Selection tool allow technical illustrators to create precision graphics without resorting to external design applications such as Freehand and Illustrator. This is a great improvement over previous versions of Flash that had a minimal set of drawing tools.

?

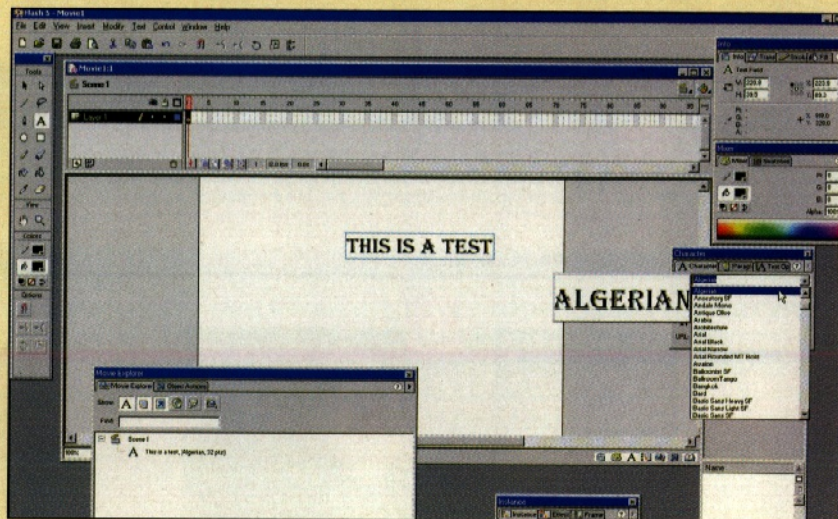
Freehand Import

If you are creating complex graphics then you may still want to use a dedicated graphics application such as Freehand. Because of this, Flash 5 enables you to import files in Freehand 7, 8 and 9 file formats while still managing to retain any original layer information.

?

Vector Graphics

Vector graphics are images that are described by a mathematical formula rather than by a pixel by pixel layout on the screen. This means that vector images can be enlarged to any size without any image degradation, unlike bitmap images that become blocky and less clear when enlarged.



WHAT'S NEW...

Movie Explorer

The Movie Explorer is a new tool in Flash 5 that lets you view your movie structure in a hierarchical fashion and enables you to easily edit complex projects. The Movie Explorer displays nested objects and their locations over time, makes it easy to navigate to and edit nested objects, enables you to print the structure of the project and enables you to search for text, fonts, ActionScript and symbol names. Everything you need to edit your movie can be found in the Movie Explorer.

Floating tool panels

Flash 5 introduces a large selection of floating tool palettes called tool panels. You can use these to access and modify many aspects of your movie. Panels can be nested together into related groups so they don't clutter up all of your work space and make Flash 5 much easier to use than previous versions.

XML Transfer Support

Because XML is rapidly gaining support on the Web, Flash 5 has built-in XML Transfer Support. This means

Flash 5 enables developers to use XML structured data within Flash applications on the Web for eCommerce purposes. By incorporating XML Objects within a Flash movie, it's possible to create shopping carts, interactive forms and stock data for display within a Web page.

HTML Text Support

When you are creating your Flash movie, you can choose between using anti-aliased Flash text or HTML text within your animation. HTML 1.0 text tags can be used during the creation of movies and HTML formatted files can be loaded while a Flash movie is running to update the text content.

ActionScript Development Tools

Flash 4 introduced a built-in scripting language to include variables, conditional logic and manipulation of object properties while movies are playing. Flash 5 has upgraded ActionScript so it now matches the syntax and structure of JavaScript. This makes it easier to develop interactivity. The new ActionScript Editor has novice and expert modes for editing and includes drag-and-drop features as well as text editing. Scripts can be exported as ASCII files to be edited in a text editor and then re-imported. A built-in debugger keeps your ActionScripts structured correctly.

This means you can create your designs in Freehand and then import them into Flash for animation. This can save a lot of work compared to the previous tedious methods of constructing layered animations a single layer at a time.

Usability

If you've used Flash 4, you may be a little worried that Macromedia has changed the user interface of the program. There's no need – using Flash 5 is a pleasure. The new floating tool panels make it simple to keep track of everything you are doing in your animation and makes it simple to make changes when needed. Here's an example. Instead of the small set of simple controls to manipulate text in Flash 4, Flash 5 has its own floating tool panel dedicated to updating and controlling text in the animation. When you select a font from the pop-up menu in the Character tab, you can see what the text looks like in a preview box. You can also adjust point size, kerning, colour and add a URL directly into the tool panel. The Paragraph tab enables you to modify the way text is justified and

set margins and paragraph indents. This level of control over text is much higher than you get in most other graphics applications.

The amount of control from the tool panels extends to every other aspect of Flash 5 including colours, frames, instances, transforms and so on. You really do get to manipulate things at a much higher level than before.

Is it as flash as all that?

Flash 5 is a superb update over previous versions with a level of usability not found in other animation applications for the Web. It's intuitive, easy to use and produces great results. All in all, it's a worthy successor and Adobe has a lot of catching up to do. □

THE VERDICT

Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★☆
Value	★★★★☆
Overall	★★★★☆



Something to watch out for when choosing a hosting company

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Preferred partner for



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2000



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0800 917 9069



Cut

Forget the big telecoms, the Net is a cheap way of calling people from your PC. Steve Patient saves you money

JARGON BUSTER

?

Dialler

A piece of software used to initiate a Net connection.

?

Callback

A feature whereby the telco rings you and when you pick up the phone, rings the number you want to speak to with the call being routed over the Net.

?

Gateway

A switch which transfers a call from the Net to a traditional PSTN (Public Switched Telephone Network).

?

SSL

Secure Sockets Layer. The encryption technology used for secure transfer of credit and debit card information. It only secures the transfer, not what the company does with it afterward.

?

Tariff

The cost per minute of a call between two locations.

your phone bill

The Net goes everywhere the phone system goes. It enables you to visit anywhere on Earth for the cost of a local call. Obviously, if there was a way of breaking out of the Net and re-entering the telephone system in another location, you could talk to anyone in the world at little more than the cost of a local call.

This is what Net call companies do. You enter the number of the person you want to speak to via your computer and the call is routed through the Net instead of the normal voice telephone system. It rejoins the telephone system locally to the phone you're calling.

The upside is the lower cost. The downside is mobile phone audio quality, the need for access to a suitable PC and a slight hesitation, as if your call is being routed via geostationary satellite. The delay is a result of rebuilding the message after its been digitised and fragmented on the Net.

The kit you need to call depends on the technology of the call company you choose. At the



The net2phone standalone software is a neat application offering a number of free services including PC to PC calls

very least, you're going to need a PC, at most an MMX multimedia PC with a headset, or mic and speaker. You're also need a 28.8K Net connection.

You may need to download special dialler software or you might be able to call from any PC just using the company supplied ID and password.

Whatever method you follow, in some cases Net calling can reduce the high cost of long distance calls to zero. This is too good to pass on, so who you gonna call?

EASY NET CALLS

WHAT YOU NEED FOR PC TO PC PHONE CALLS

TO CONNECT A call to a phone, a Net call company must have access to a local gateway at the other end, which places the call. Unfortunately, this means someone has to pay for the call from the gateway to the person to whom you wish to speak.

Because of the need for hardware in remote places, there can be no free software-based solution for PC to phone calls. However, PC to PC calls can be completely free, as is the case with Net2Phone.

In practice, there are dozens of PC to PC solutions, but despite interconnection standards, it's still much easier to connect using identical software at each end.



You can download PC to PC software from SoftSeek (www.softseek.com)

Such software includes videophones as well as simple voice connections. In fact, you got one free with your PC – NetMeeting is part of IE. Then there's WebPhone, SpeakFreely, SoftFone, PowWow, PhoneFree and dozens more. They all do basically the same job. Check out a few at any shareware collection site.

'Net calling cuts the cost of long distance calls to zero. This is too good to pass on'

Go2Call

www.go2call.co.uk

ALTHOUGH QUITE INTENSE, the online signup was painless.

We were able to call within two minutes of arriving on Go2Call's site.

Go2Call enables you to make free calls to and within the US, Canada, the UK, Ireland and Germany. All the calls are made via a privileged Java applet which displays ads.

There's a fairly sophisticated online address book or you can dial direct from the Java applet. Although you can't call mobiles, you can call US toll-free numbers via a special box, should you want to.

One of the best features is CallFinder. Just enter a destination to receive tariffs from a number of popular Net call services, plus links to them.

At the price, it's well worth waiting for a few ad banners to download and putting up with having a gift shop constantly shoved in your face.

THE VERDICT

What's good:

It's completely free. CallFinder is neat

What's bad:

Only works with selected countries. Pesky ads.

Overall

7/10

Call2

www.call2.com

YOU CAN'T SIGN up online for Call2's EasyVoice service

but it does offer a printable form for faxing. You commit to a minimum of £25 worth of calls and must specify the numbers you'll be calling from in advance. If none of your plastic pleasures, you have to prepay. Naturally, you can also contact Call2 by phone – enter your own number and it rings you.

Although your call must originate online, once you enter a number your phone rings. When you pick it up, the callee's phone rings and you talk just as you would for a normal call.

The features on offer include conference calls and the ability to use the Call2 service to embed a Web-based voice contact into your own Web site.

We like this service for two reasons: it doesn't require you to download any software and it works with your telephone.

THE VERDICT

What's good:

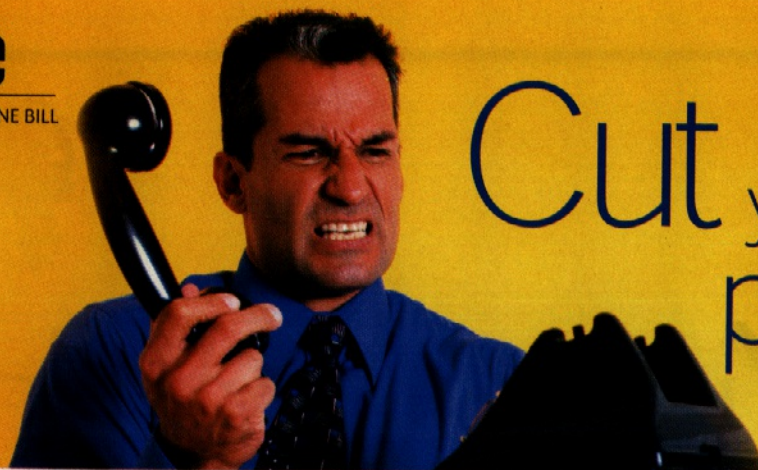
Talk to anyone with a phone using your own handset

What's bad:

No fax or voicemail and the calls are a little dear

Overall

6/10



Cut your phone bill

Callserve

www.callserve.com

TO USE CALLSERVE, you have to call via a multimedia PC and download a 12.5Mb ActiveX dialler first. You can install this immediately but have to wait until your PIN number arrives by email. The minimum prepayment charge is £20.

We had a few problems getting the dialler to work, but once up and running, it emulates a mobile phone. The service itself is limited to making calls – no fax or voicemail features here.

Once working, the CallServe service is fine. Although not as elegant as transferring the call to a phone, it is dead cheap. Despite our problems, CallServe does deliver but the mobile phone interface is a bit dated. Also, it is a PC-only service. What about users on other computer platforms? CallServe wouldn't say if it has any plans to extend the service.

THE VERDICT

What's good:

A seriously low-cost service

What's bad:

Seriously naff software dialler

Overall

7 / 10



The Stream

www.thestream.com

THE STREAM IS A US-based Net call service with a minimum prepayment charge of \$10. To use it, you have to download a 757Kb Java application.

The call costs we checked are slightly higher than for CallServe but a lot lower than Call2. And while The Stream doesn't support too many advanced features, one useful extra is Callback.

Callback lets you to specify a number to call and a time to call it. When the time arrives, the phone on the number you specified rings. When you pick it up, the phone at the other end rings, which enables you to make phone to phone calls over the Net. Oh, and there are free call minutes for new signers.

Once again, the service worked well. We had no problems with it at all. This is as it should be. It is, after all, old technology by Net standards having been around for three years or more.

THE VERDICT

What's good:

Callback is neat and the software downloads fast

What's bad:

Few advanced features

Overall

8 / 10



net2phone

www.net2phone.com

NET2PHONE IS STANDALONE Windows software which

supports a much wider range of features than the others. It even has a People Search feature.

Although the PC to PC calls, fax to PC and voicemails are free, to place a call to another phone you have to prepay a minimum of \$25. You can do this in almost any way you like. We suspect you could even turn up at net2phone's offices and hand them a bucket of pennies. The actual call costs are similar to those at The Stream.

Net2phone works well, and is very good when calling another Net2Phone user. We experienced no problems when we tried the service. Overall, it's an excellent service, the more so because it does something for nothing.

THE VERDICT

What's good:

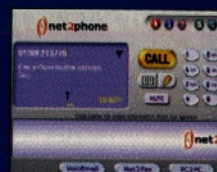
A good, low cost PC to phone service with a number of free services

What's bad:

Nothing at all

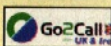
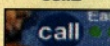
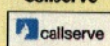
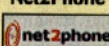
Overall

9 / 10



Practical Internet
BEST BUY ★★★★★

INTERNET PHONE SERVICES HEAD-TO-HEAD

	Go2Call 	Call2 	Callserve 	Net2Phone 	The Stream 
Phone/phone	no	yes	no	no	no
PC/phone	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
PC/fax	no	no	no	yes	no
Voicemail	no	no	no	yes	no
Callback	no	no	no	no	yes
Address book	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Operating systems	Win95/98/NT/2000	any	Win95/98/NT/2000	Win95/98/NT/2000	Win95/98/NT/2000
Dialler	Java app	Web page	ActiveX	Window app	Java
Payment method	n/a	credit/debit offline	credit/debit online	various prepay	credit/debit online

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Laugh a

Feeling run down by life and in need of some cheering up? Let **Robin Lewis** guide you through the Web's funniest comedy sites

The Internet can be one of the most unexpected media; unrivalled in its potential innovation and capability for controversy, it's a place where the sacred and profane can meet and be forever changed. Capable of pushing the limits (at the moment) because of its relative freedom of expression, the Internet has become a breeding ground for innovative and subversive comedy. It can also be rather amusing.

Zeppotron, the force behind *The 11 O'Clock Show* and *Ali G*, produces TV Go Home (www.tvgohome.com), an extremely funny Web

site which should be viewed with an open mind. It takes the form of a TV listings guide for the psychotically deranged, and as well as being very amusing, it's a good example of the crossover between the Internet and traditional media. No strangers to controversy, Zeppotron are keen to push it to its limits.

The company's co-founder and TV Go Home boss, Charlie Brooker, said: "Most Internet comedy falls into one of two categories; vaguely funny but woefully amateurish, or slickly executed but unforgivably bland. People using the Internet want compact, bullet-proof humour that's clearly not been watered down by some unseen committee."

Fellow co-founder Peter Holmes added: "If the Internet is a global playground, then we're somewhere near the swings. People are calling us the big lads, and we're smoking near a virtual motorbike."

CREAM OF THE COMEDY CROP

THE BEST WEB SITES FOR FINDING MORE INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR FAVOURITE COMEDY MOMENTS

The Simpsons Archive guide
www.snpp.com



THE SIMPSONS IS quite simply the funniest and most innovative series of the last decade, and arguably the most influential cartoon ever made. The Simpsons Episode Guide is impressive in its detail, mapping each of the episodes in all the twelve series with all the quotes and background information.

Quote: Bart: Nothing you say can upset us. We're the MTV generation.
 Lisa: We feel neither highs or lows.
 Homer: Really? What's it like?
 Lisa: Ehh. [shrugs]

Related Sites: www.sky.com/simpsons/

Reggie Online
<http://members.netscapeonline.co.uk/pf757/reggie>



THE BRILLIANTLY SATIRICAL Reggie Perrin was Leonard Rossiter's finest hour, which considering *Rising Damp*, is saying something. All the quotes and minutiae of the series are here at this official Reggie page, and considering the show was made thirty years ago there's still lots of up-to-date information and a breakdown of all the (many) catchphrases.

Quote: Twenty-two minutes late, badger ate a junction box at New Malden

Related Sites: <http://lightning.prohosting.com/~jisham/Perrin/PerrinFrame.htm>

Bill Hicks "People Who Hate People" Party HQ
www.billhicks.com

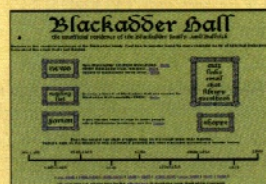


A LEGENDARY STAND-UP comedian with the darkest sense of humour, Bill Hicks was a genius. His sense of humour goes close to the bone but he's one of the most influential – and funniest – comedians of the last 30 years. This site has a biography, links to various organisations that Hicks worked with when he was alive and lots of information.

Quote: The US Supreme Court says pornography is any art that has no artistic merit and causes sexual thought. That sounds like every commercial on TV

Related Sites: www.angunn.demon.co.uk/bill.html

Blackadder Hall
www.blackadderhall.co.uk



BLACKADDER HAS GOT a surprising lack of any decent coverage on the Web. This is the best of them with links to turnip-related sites for fans of Baldrick and co.

Quote: Crone: Two things, my lord, must thee know of the Wisewoman. First, she is... a woman! And second, she is... Edmund: Wise?
 Crone: You do know her then?
 Edmund: No, just a wild stab in the dark, which is incidentally what you'll be getting if you don't start being a bit more helpful

Related sites: www.themole.demon.co.uk

minute!

He added: "People think the Internet is the future. It's not – it's the past. At Zeppotron we've already developed a method of transmitting pedal-powered thoughts. Two of the guys had a go at it last week and the smaller one fainted. It's a glitch, but we're on to it."



TV Go Home: Part of the Zeppotron conspiracy and very funny to boot

A strange thing happened...

The wonderful thing about the Internet is its capability for mischief. Moving pictures, sounds, text, and images can all be used – simultaneously if necessary. The cross-over potential is immense. For example, *The Mark Thomas Comedy Product*, a Channel 4 comedy programme, ran an exposé of the US spy base at Menwith Hill last year.

Discovering that the air base's air space was not restricted, Thomas bought the Menwith Hill domain name (www.menwithhill.com) and under the strapline "A beautiful piece of America – right here in England!", proceeded to offer balloon trips over it. The site's still up and running and makes a very good social point as well as being funny. It's also a great example of how comedy can make the cross-over between traditional media and the Internet while keeping things humorous.

The line between Internet and traditional forms of comedy is becoming more and more blurred.

The Digital Comedy Nipple (www.digitalcomedynipple.co.uk) uses animation, audio files, video clips and games as well as traditional textual humour. Mark Oswin, Jim Griffiths and Jamie Sefton, the site's creators, have written and performed comedy for



Menwith Hill Tours: see one of the secret treasures of American heritage



GAG CITY, U.S.A

ENGLISHMEN, IRISHMEN AND SCOTSMEN IN BARS...

IF YOU WANT to be a raconteur at parties, capable of sending your friends into an orgy of belly-laughing, then maybe you should actually learn some decent jokes.

Joke Of The Day has a flop ten if you want your jokes really cheesy (www.joke-of-the-day.co.uk), and Cybercheeze's jokes can be equally terrible (www.cybercheeze.com). The Top 100 Humor Sites (www.top100humor.com) is an excellent place to start looking for a selection as it lists 100 of the best gag-sites on the Web. The Jokefile (www.jokefile.co.uk) is another good one. It features the legendary Darwin Awards, given to those who have improved the gene pool by killing themselves in spectacularly stupid ways. There are some gems here if you look hard enough. Most sites will let you sign in your email address and you'll get sent a new joke every day – or you can contribute yourself in the same manner.

Just for your amusement, here are some one-liners from the Jokefile to start off your career in comedy...

- Money isn't everything, but it keeps the kids in touch.
- Jesus loves you! It's everybody else who thinks you're a prat.
- If you believe in telekinesis, raise my hand.
- I want to die peacefully in my sleep like my grandfather, not screaming in terror like his passengers.
- Clones are people too.

The Joke File

joke categories

- animal jokes
- bloke jokes
- blonde jokes
- computer jokes
- Darwin Awards
- food jokes
- girl jokes
- occupational jokes
- odds & sods

- jokes about men (18)
- jokes about single women
- jokes about the stupidity of men or (2)
- jokes about women (12)

Looking for offensive stuff about women? Try

What class down your wedding list at 100 m.p.h.

The Joke File: A funny tale to match every mood and moment. It's all done in the best possible taste

get us at: www.digitalcomedynipple.co.uk



NE SE CHINESE QUINERS

It's a bit of a joke about a Chinese restaurant

and a bit of a joke about a Chinese restaurant

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You too can shoot Celine Dion and snub the Queen Mum at the Digital Comedy Nipple Web site

television and radio and have made a successful jump into new media. A Shoot Celine Dion game just wouldn't work anywhere else.

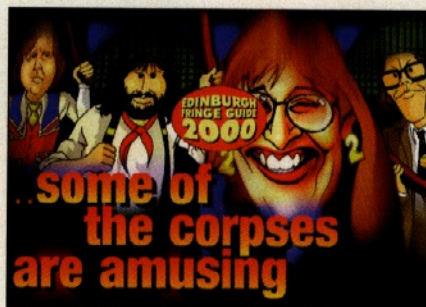
Serious profession

There are lots of people who take comedy as seriously as an arrow through the neck with a gas bill tied to it.

Some Of The Corpses Are Amusing (www.notbbc.co.uk/corpses) is a Web site which is sombre without being solemn – it's genuinely interested in the minutiae of comedy. Anyone who wants to know how comedy is put together could do worse than have a look at SOTCAA. For the connoisseur, a resource site like Comedy Circus (www.comedycircus.com) is essential. The site gives streaming audio

snippets of live performances and e-tails some comic videos.

A more serious site from Georgian College in Ontario, Canada, runs a course called Sitcoms And Society. It will give you all you need to know about sitcoms over the last 40 years at <http://edu.georgianc.on.ca/courses/sitcoms/reference.htm>. Lacking a tongue anywhere near its cheek, the site is nevertheless good for social commentary, featuring such ball-bouncingly funny quotes as this one from Darrell Hamamoto: "Through narratives that assimilate social contradictions into everyday personal experience, the situation comedy has stood as an enduring sociodramatic model that has helped 'explain American society to itself.' How we laughed. □



Some Of The Corpses Are Amusing: comedy that's as serious as a football in the groin

CARTOON CAPERS



MOST IMPORTANT RULE ABOUT OWNING PENGUIN, ROLE YOU MUST NEVER FORGET...

JOHN ALLISON draws Bobbins, an online comic at www.bobbins.org. It's a good example of how to experiment with the genre.

John spoke to Practical Internet about how he got into Internet

cartooning: "After leaving university I was unemployed for about five months. I was putting together submission packs for possible syndication in America. As I was only able to send out photocopies, I put the strips up on a Geocities site to show off my colour work.

"Most people are still drawing newspaper strips, but I think that will change given time. The best thing about the Net is that the audience is there for you, no matter how creatively mundane you might be!"



JOHN'S FAVOURITE NET CARTOONS ARE:

Hounds Home by Ryan Duchane

www.houndshome.com

"A kind of 21st century Peanuts. Boy meets world meets monkey."



Goats by Jon Rosenberg

www.goats.com

"Long running epic tale of a single New Yorker, his satanic chicken, lady killing goat and miscellaneous pals."



Superosity by Chris Crosby

www.superosity.com

"Idiot wears cape and enjoys surreal yet hilarious pop culture adventures."



Sinfest by Tatsuya Ishida

www.sinfest.net

"The best drawn comic strip in the modern world."



When I Grow Up by Jeffrey Rowland

www.whenigrowup.net

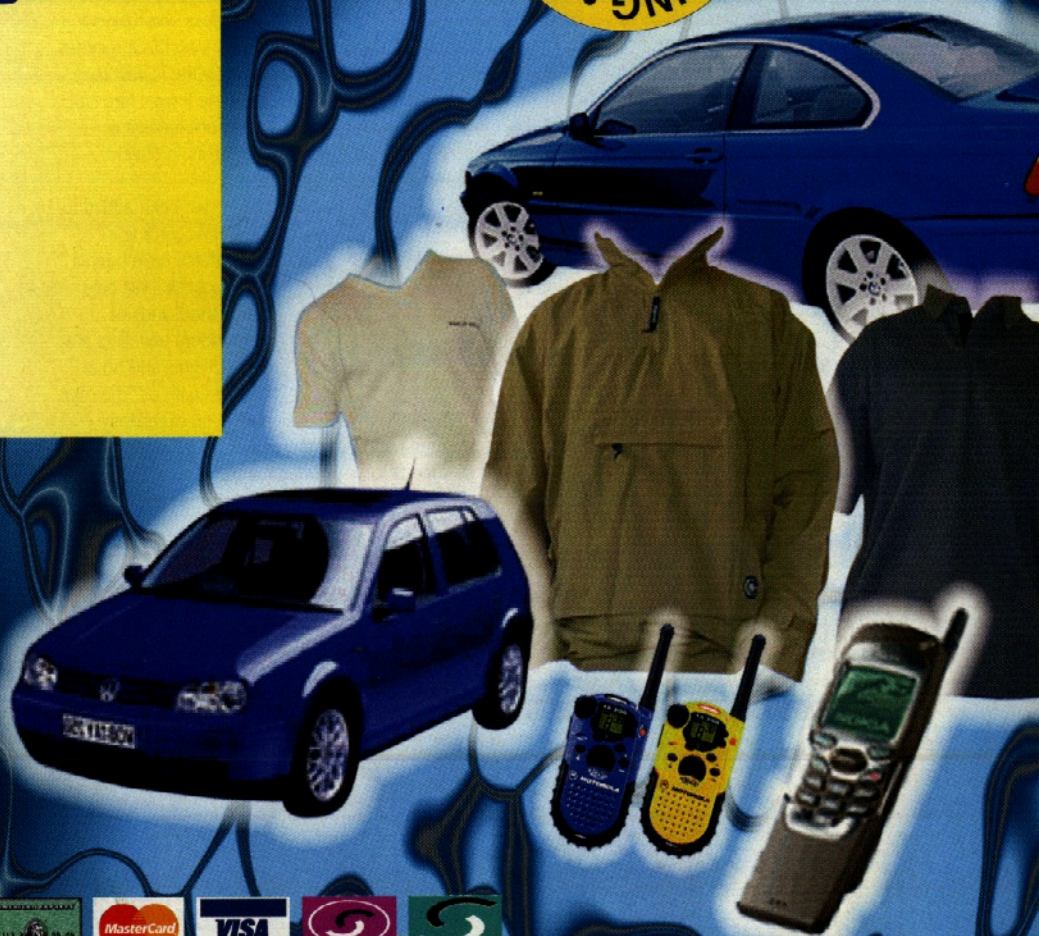
"The peculiar adventures of Generation X"



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* excludes mobiles and cars



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THE LOW FARES WEBSITE

Get low cost flights from Ryanair.Com

RYANAIR IS EUROPE'S LARGEST low fares airline with seven million passengers operating from bases in London Stansted, Dublin and Glasgow Prestwick. It offers 45 different routes to destinations in Italy, France, Germany, Ireland and Scandinavia.

The airline's Web site at www.ryanair.com was launched just this year and has been a phenomenal success. Bookings via the Internet are up to 70% of total bookings during Internet sales periods and on average account for 35% of Ryanair's total bookings.

The reason for this success is the great choice of low fare airline tickets, according to Sean Coyle, Commercial Director of Ryanair.com.

"We have made the cheapest fares we offer exclusively available to Internet users, which means it is worth your while making the Net the first place to look when planning a trip," he says.

"Because we also guarantee that we will not be beaten on price by any other Web site, users are confident that they are getting the best deal around. Because of the savings we are making by cutting out the travel agent and CRS systems we can make lower fares more widely available on the Net."

The Web site is very fast to load because graphics have been kept to a minimum. The home page displays the lowest fare currently offered on each route – and also provides useful links to route maps, timetables and destination information.



The simple booking process is painless and makes it possible to book a flight in less than three minutes. The booking engine searches by the lowest fare class and shows availability at the lowest fare first.

If you need to travel at different times it is possible to view more fares/flights to check availability on the same day.

Online hotel bookings have also been added to the site. According to Coyle, these have been a great success. "We are finding thousands of independent travellers are making flights and hotel bookings with us," he says.

All in all, www.ryanair.com is an excellently designed and informative site. The added bonus of its superb 'Low Fare Guarantee' means that it always lives up to its name as 'The Low Fares Web site'.

'Ryanair.com will not be beaten on price by any other Web site'

FLY

Fly across Europe with www.ryanair.com – the low fares Web site



SEARCHING FOR LOW COST AIR FLIGHTS ONLINE WITH RYANAIR.COM



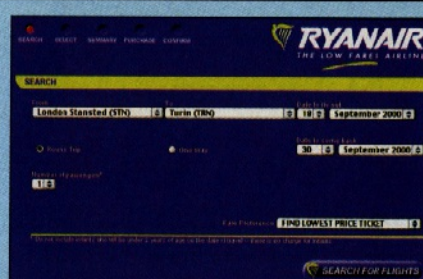
1 Visting Ryanair.Com

Go to www.ryanair.com. Click the word 'Promotions' on the sidebar to enter Practical Internet's promotion page and enter the password 'guarantee'.



2 Selecting destinations

Read the terms and conditions, then click 'Proceed to Book'. Using the pull-down menus, select when and where you want to fly from, then enter your travel dates.



3 Choosing trip details

Enter the number of persons who will be flying in the left corner and click either the 'Round Trip' or 'One Way' buttons to choose your type of flight.

FOR JUST £9*



Return flights to Italy, France, Denmark and Ireland for just £9*

TAKE A FUN-FILLED autumn break to a wide choice of exciting European destinations for only £9* with this great value offer from Ryanair.Com and Practical Internet.

Does the pasta, history and passion of Italy tempt you? If so, you can fly to Turin, Ancona or Lamezia in Italy from London, Stansted with this special deal.

If you prefer the fine wine and culture of France then why not fly to Nîmes instead? With this deal, we've got the best prices on air travel to the south of France.

Or, if Denmark's fjords, LegoLand and the charm of Copenhagen sound good, then why not fly to Aarhus for a Scandinavian break instead?

To take up this special offer of one flight per *Practical Internet* reader, simply go to Ryanair's low fares Web site at www.ryanair.com. Travel must be completed between 1 October 2000 and 14 December 2000, excluding October 20-31 and Fridays and Sundays.

Fly to these great destinations

Practical Internet readers are entitled to flights with Ryanair, Europe's largest low fares airline, on the following routes:

London Stansted to:

Turin, Ancona, Lamezia, in Italy
Nîmes in the South of France
Aarhus in Denmark
Dublin, Shannon and Cork in Ireland

Glasgow Prestwick to:

Dublin

Birmingham to:

Dublin



TERMS & CONDITIONS OF THIS OFFER:

• Payment will be accepted only at the time of booking in Sterling Pounds. There will be no availability on Fridays and Sundays for travel. All travel dates must be on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

• No alterations, refunds, amendments or exchanges are permitted once a booking has been accepted. All flights are subject to change without prior notice. Previous bookings made prior to this promotion cannot be exchanged or refunded for any ticket acquired under this promotion.

• Flights are strictly subject to availability at the time of reservation. Two nights or Saturday night minimum stay. Maximum stay of 1 month. Passengers are responsible for paying applicable airport and local government taxes including PSC. Passengers are responsible for their own passports, and insurance requirements. It is recommended that passengers take out insurance.

• No child discounts are permitted. No infants under 2 years. Flights are available on Ryanair services only.

• Payment is via credit card or Switch debit card only. (the credit cards that will be accepted are: Visa, Mastercard, American Express - a £3 handling charge is payable on all credit card transactions).

• A £15 re-issue charge is liable on all lost or stolen air tickets. Ryanair Ltd cannot be held responsible for air tickets lost or stolen.

• All Ryanair tickets remain subject to the terms and conditions under which they are issued and such conditions shall prevail in the event of any inconsistency within the terms of the offer.

• Ryanair reserve the right to vary any of the terms & conditions of this offer at its discretion at any time, without notice.

• The number of seats available for this offer is limited to 100,000 in total. Once this limit has been reached, no applications, even if valid, can be accepted. The number of seats available on each flight is restricted and strictly subject to availability. It is understood that the offer is strictly subject to availability at all times and an element of flexibility will be required by the customers. Seats allocated to this offer may be fully booked even though seats are still for sale on the same flight. Ryanair cannot guarantee that every application will be accommodated and will be unable to fulfil some requests towards the end of the promotion.

• No tickets will be issued at the airport on departure.

• Persons booking must be over 18 years of age.

• Maximum party size that can be booked at any one transaction is 9.

• Ryanair cannot be responsible for those passengers who are unable to make a booking on the Internet. Bookings can be made on our Web site at www.ryanair.com only.

• Rail / Coach services are the sole responsibility of the subsequent rail companies. Ryanair is not responsible for late or cancelled trains, or for flights that are missed as a result of delayed / non-arrival of trains. Ryanair Ltd accepts no responsibility for the late or non- delivery of rail tickets.

* Take advantage now!

THIS AMAZING Ryan Air/*Practical Internet* offer entitles you to a return fare for one passenger costing just £9 plus taxes and charges. Passengers are responsible for paying applicable airport and local Government taxes. Other costs: £3 credit card charge when booked via Ryanair.com.

The flights must be completed between 1 October to 14 December 2000, excluding 20 to 31 October. No travel on Fridays or Sundays. Booking Dates: 1 October to 31 October 2000. Reservations must be made only through Ryanair's Web site at www.ryanair.com using the *Practical Internet* promotions page - accessed by clicking the promotions button on the sidebar of the site's front page. Please use the password 'guarantee'.

Book on-line at www.RYANAIR.com



4

Searching for flights

Click the 'Search For Flights' button to see a list of low cost flights to your destination. Choose from the three options at the bottom of the screen or select a flight.



5

Confirming bookings

Check the times, price and other details of your chosen flight, then click on the fare restrictions box to accept them. Choose 'Confirm and Continue' to book your seat(s).

How much is yours worth?

Is your domain name worth a fortune? As scores of names are sold every day for dizzying figures, **Mark Newman** explains how to value yours and then sell it

With UK domain names costing less than a bag of chips and dot coms plunging to around a fiver a time, there's no longer a financial reason not to jump on the domain name bandwagon and then try your hand at a bit of cyber-prospecting.

Invest wisely in some short, catchy names, find a buyer for it using one of the Web's many domain auction sites and in no time you could hit the big time. Not a week goes by without another high-profile domain name being sold to a dot com business. Recent sales have included Loans.com for \$3million, Income.com for \$2.1million and Biz.com for \$1.75million.

It's unlikely that you'll already have such a high-profile name or even be able to buy one cheaply to sell on, but other less attractive domain names can sell for tidy amounts, too.

Buying your domain

If you don't already have a snappy domain name that's worth selling, it may not be too late to get

The screenshot shows the 123-reg.co.uk website. The header includes the site name and navigation links. The main content area features a large '99p' price tag and text stating 'It's never been easier or cheaper to have your own domain name'. Below this, a list of services included in the 'Stunning Price' is shown: Web Forwarding, Catch All E-mail Forwarding, Up to 100 E-mail Forwarding Addresses, Holding Page Wizard, Change Name Servers, Change IP/Tel/Fax/URL domains, and Full Domain Management. A 'Why is 123-reg So Popular?' section lists several benefits, including 100% secure SSL & POP encryption, no domain name release fee, 24-hour customer support, and being a large PLC in the UK. An 'ORDER NOW!' button is prominently displayed.

123-Reg.co.uk sells UK domain names for just 99p but, like other domain registries, it also expects you to pay a £2.50 registration fee and VAT

one. Try searching for remaining names at UK Reg (www.ukreg.com), NicNames (www.nicnames.co.uk) and 123-reg (www.123-reg.co.uk). If you find your first choice has been snapped up, visit Great Domains (www.greatdomains.com) to make an unsolicited offer to its owner. You never know, he or she might be looking to sell!

HOW MUCH IS YOUR DOMAIN NAME WORTH?

THIS APPRAISAL MODEL will give you an indication of the approximate value of your domain name. Follow the steps carefully and calculate your domain name's score. While we'd urge you to seek a professional appraiser who has access to real world data if you

require a highly accurate valuation, this model will give you a rough guide to what you can expect from your domain name – as long as you find a buyer. Take note that we can't guarantee you'll receive the price!

Reproduced with permission of DomainIQ (www.domainiq.com). Copyright © 2009

1. Is it a business magnet?

Begin by assessing whether your domain name is aimed at a particular industry.

If it's associated with a major one, such as car sales or banking, it scores higher than a sub-industry, such as arts and crafts.

Select one score from the six choices on the right.

INDUSTRY LINKS

A. Major Industry:

High Range: score +8 to +10
Mid-Range: score +5 to +7
Low Range: score +1 to +4

B. Sub-Industry:

High Range: score +5 to +6
Mid-Range: score +3 to +4
Low Range: score +1 to +2

2. Is it short and snappy?

Short domain names attract higher values than longer ones. Those which combine numbers and/or hyphens with words are devalued because there's often confusion when the name is communicated through radio, word-of-mouth and other advertising. Select one score from each of the sections below.

EXTRA WORDS

A. For each 'the' or 'and' in your domain name, score -5
B. If your name begins with 'e' score -3
C. If your name begins with 'i' score -3
D. If your name begins with 'v' score -5
E. Ends in 'est' or 'ing', score -3
* If this doesn't apply to your domain name, score 0

NUMBER OF WORDS

A. Is the name one word? score +10
B. Two words? score +8
C. Three words or longer? score -3

NUMBER OF CHARACTERS

A. Less than four? score +10
B. Four to six? score +9
C. Seven to eleven? score +8
D. Twelve to fourteen? score +6
E. Fifteen to nineteen? score -4
F. Twenty or more? score -6

HYPHENS AND NUMBERS

If domain name contains a hyphen score -7
If domain name contains a number score -7
* If this section does not apply to your domain name score 0

CLARITY

Would the name be confusing if heard on the radio?

A. If you answered no, score +10
B. If you answered yes, score -8

Could the name be easily confused with other spelling variations?

A. If you answered no, score +10
B. If you answered yes, score -8

INTEGRITY

Does the name convey the nature or quality of goods/services in a positive manner?

A. If you answered yes, score +10
B. If you answered no, score -8

Great Domains has over 1.5 million domain names up for auction at prices ranging from a few dollars to a few million. Take a look at its Priced To Sell and High Profile Listings sections for snappy, short domain names at half-tempting prices (although your bank manager might think differently). Use the Universal Currency Converter (www.xe.net/ucc) to turn the asking prices from

dollars into British sterling. That way you won't get a nasty surprise.

If you still cannot find the exact name you want, buying international domains is an option. Although you will not be able to sell them on for the same high rates as .coms, they can still attract large figures.

Steve Brown, Finance Director of Rename (www.rename.com), says: "By registering a name in another country, businesses and individuals can have a clever and memorable Web address. For example, there have only been approximately 100,000 Austrian .at top level domain names registered and most of these are German. Rename offers visitors the opportunity to search for the Austrian domain they would like and register it, if available."

The choice of top level domains will be further boosted this autumn when a number of new top level domains including '.banc' and '.shop' are introduced. NetNames (www.gtld.com) offers you the chance to pre-register domains before they actually go on sale.

Selling your domain

With your domain name purchased, use the valuation formula we've explained here to calculate the potential value of your name. Now it's time to find a buyer – and this is the tricky bit.

Your first step should be to add your domain to the free listings at Great Domains (www.greatdomains.com). If the site finds a buyer



If you can't buy a .com address because it's already been registered, Rename (www.rename.com) sells Austrian '.at' names for \$99 (about £65)



Put your domain name up for auction at Shoutloud (www.shoutloud.com) and if it sells you could be rich

How much is yours worth?

for your domain name, the commission charged will be 10% of the sales price, plus \$250 (approx £165) for escrow fees to properly transfer the registration through Internic – the global domain name organisation – to establish a trust account for the sales proceeds during escrow, and to provide appropriate disclosures to properly protect all parties.

Other domain auctioneers charge similar amounts if your sale is successful. ShoutLoud (www.shoutloud.com) charges \$50 (£30) if the closing price is less than \$1,000 (£675) and 7.5% if the closing price is equal to, or greater than \$1,000. Afternic (www.afternic.com) charges similar amounts. For sales under \$1,000 it charges \$50 (£30) and for those exceeding \$1,000 it charges commission of 5%.

Among the other services worth considering are Names123 (www.names123.com), NamesForBid (www.namesforbid.com), URL Merchant (www.urlmerchant.com) and Names Master (www.namesmaster.com).



A huge range of 1.5 million domain names are up for sale at GreatDomains (www.greatdomains.com)

It's a good idea to check your domain name against an expired domain list to find out how common your domain name is in comparison to other similar names available. Check out expired domain lists at Unclaimed Domains (www.unclaimeddomains.com), Domains Weekly (www.domainsweekly.com) and DNS Research (www.dnsresearch.com) to find out how saturated the marketplace is with certain kinds of names.

The easy way out

If you don't fancy getting your calculator out to work out how much your domain should be worth, visit ShoutLoud's free online valuation service (www.shoutloud.com/cgi-bin/qvalue.cgi) instead.

Type in your domain name, the number of words in the name, make an assessment of the language clarity in it and the appeal of the name. Then, within minutes, you'll be emailed an approximate price of what you could expect to earn.

If you can find a buyer, you'll be cashing in in no time. Good luck! □

HOW MUCH IS YOUR DOMAIN NAME WORTH? CONT...

3. Is your name memorable?

If your domain name is valuable, it must be instantly recognisable and memorable so that any business that buys it can be assured of repeat trade.

IMPACT

Will people remember the domain name after hearing it?

- A. If your answer is a strong yes, score +10
- B. If you're answer is 'well maybe', score +5
- C. If your answer is no, score -10

RECOGNITION

Is the name recognisable as a common word, expression or phrase?

- A. If you answered yes, score +10
- B. If you answered 'maybe', score +5
- C. If you answered no, score -10

4. Is it a generic name?

Would a prospective customer easily relate the words in your domain name to the product or service offered? For example, Phone.com is a great example of a name that is both generic and precisely targeted to an industry.

TARGET RELEVANCE

Would you say with certainty that your name is a

generic target name?

- A. If you answered yes, score +10
- B. If you 'unsure' or no, score 0

SNAPPY AND RELEVANT

Does your domain name consist of just one word and qualify as a generic target name?

- A. If the answer is a resounding yes, score +25
- B. If the answer is no or you are unsure, score 0

5. Is it legal?

Since anti-cybersquatting legislation is taking place in the US and Europe, make sure your domain name doesn't infringe any copyrights or trademarks. Perform a search at the US Patent and Trademark Office (www.uspto.gov).

TRADEMARKS

- A. If your name conflicts with a trademark, score -100% of the total score after completing this valuation
- B. If your name does not have a potential or existing trademark conflict score +10

6. Are you rich?

Tally up your score. The higher the points, the more the domain name is potentially worth. Take note that names ending with '.net' should be rated at 20%-25% of the value of a '.com' domain name. Names ending in and '.org' should be rated at 10% of the final value.

CALCULATE YOUR SCORE

121 points or more: £135,000 and higher

111-120 points: £85,000 – £135,000

91-110 points: £55,000 – £85,000

81-90 points: £40,000 – £55,000

76-80 points: £25,000 – £40,000

66-75 points: £17,000 – £25,000

51-65 points: £7,000 – £17,000

41-50 points: £4,000 – £7,000

26-40 points: £2,000 – £4,000

17-25 points: £1,000 – £2,000

11-16 points: £200 – £1,000

10 points or less: 0 – £200

HIGH PROFILE DOMAIN SALES

DOMAIN NAMES THAT HAVE BEEN SOLD FOR CRAZY FIGURES

Business.com	£5,061,000	Taxes.com	£472,000
Loans.com	£2,024,000	Act.com	£337,000
Income.com	£1,417,290	Wisdom.com	£320,000
Savings.com	£1,282,000	Tower.com	£140,000
Biz.com	£1,181,000	Architecture.com	£128,000
WallStreet.com	£695,000	Question.com	£118,000
Drugs.com	£555,000	Fruits.com	£108,000
Cinema.com	£472,000		

Source: www.greatdomains.com



Wish you'd registered Business.com? It sold for more than £5 million

Hidden Surprises?



Not with discount domains!

If you've seen domain names cheaper, make sure that:

The price isn't for less than 2 years.

The price doesn't include 'NIC fees' or VAT.

The price doesn't include forwarding or hosting services.

Our prices include VAT and all fees paid for 2 years

.com .net .org

£23.49

.co.uk .org.uk

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Also included for FREE!

Domain forwarding, DNS hosting or parking!

www.discountdomains.co.uk

Straight forward low prices with no surprises

Phone: 0161 475 0609 Fax: 0161 476 6710

Prices include VAT @ 17.5%. Prices correct at time of going to press, E&OE. Terms and conditions may apply, see website for details. DNS hosting service does not include webspace. discountdomains service provided by Max Internet Limited, Registered in England and Wales, number 393431, Regent House, Heaton Lane, Stockport. SK4 1BS

First person

Caught in the Love Net



IN THE SECOND PART OF OUR NEW SERIES LOOKING AT THE WAY PEOPLE USE THE WEB, WE CAUGHT UP WITH A COUPLE WHO DISCOVERED LOVE ON THE INTERNET

A recent study by Professor Richard Scase of the Canterbury Business School revealed that roughly two million people in Britain use dating services to find a partner. That's about one in five single people. The study expects that figure to double over the next five years, mainly due to long working hours.

The Internet is now a place where the general public spends a lot of time, and online dating services have been blossoming as a result. Meeting on the Internet is beginning to be the rule, rather than the exception.

Case in point: Darren Rowe (23) and Jenny Worley (25). They've just moved in together after meeting seven months ago thanks to DatingDirect (www.datingdirect.co.uk).

Jenny explained why she decided to use an online dating service: "It was getting towards Valentine's Day and I was still single. I figured that there must be a decent bloke out there, probably sitting in front of their keyboard too. And there was!"



Once Jenny had entered her details, it didn't take her long to get a response. Within a day, she'd got a reply to her advert – from Darren, who was already using the service. He had entered his details to look around the site, and when Jenny's profile caught his eye, he decided to send her a message. Jenny had to pay to reply to

Darren's email: "I always say I paid that £14 just for you," she grins. Darren is modest at this: "You got a bargain."

Handsome profile

The ball was then in Jenny's court: "I looked at his profile and thought he sounded quite nice. He was the only person I replied to."

"We sent each other emails for just under a week before we met. We first made contact on a Saturday and ended up going out for a drink."

Both of them were from Bournemouth – but had no idea they lived within yards of each other until they came to share a taxi home.

Jenny remembers the moment: "We only put it together when he offered to walk me home. When we pulled up at his place, we just strolled around the corner." Jenny had been walking past Darren's house on her way to work every morning, but the two had never met.

She adds: "I never knew him – both of us were working ridiculous hours. We never saw daylight."

Darren accepts that traditional ways of meeting people can be fraught with problems: "I work long hours and often I don't really have the energy to then go out. People are not quite so open and friendly as perhaps they used to be. You might want to just have a chat, but people can be cagey."

Jenny agrees: "I would always be a bit suspicious if someone started chatting me up in a pub or a club. You can't really tell anything about them." Darren adds: "Drink tends to come into it when you're out and about. And the rejections and knock-backs can be quite harsh. You could say doing it this way is a safety net." That's not to say that using an online

"Meeting on the Internet is beginning to be the rule, rather than the exception"



When Jenny met Darren: the picture Jenny first saw on the Web

FIVE OF THE BEST DATING SITES

Udate

www.ude.com

Good site that lets you register for free and gives you lots of categories to choose a partner from. One of the most professional dating services around.



Dating Direct

www.datingdirect.com

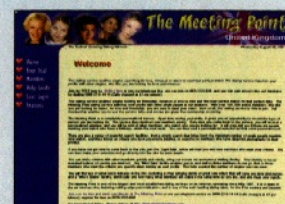
Well, it did the trick for Darren and Jenny. You have to enter your profile before you can search the database, but... that's kind of the point.



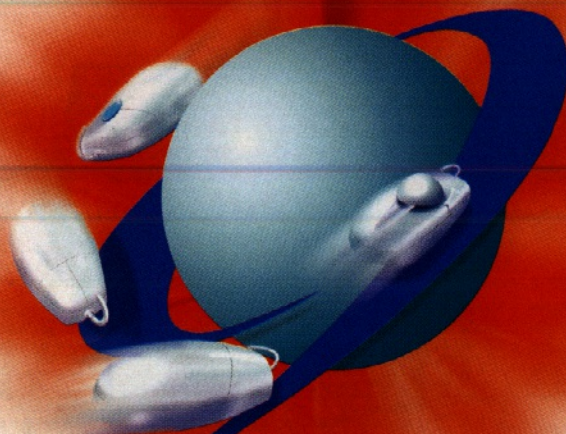
The Meeting Point

www.themeetingpoint.co.uk

Good site with lots of options to choose from. There's a free trial membership where once again you have to give details of yourself.



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web hosting from £19.95 UNIX or NT.



9Net Standard Features

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- Account "Control Panel" access via WWW • Daily Tape Backup of your data
- Expert technical support • On-site UPS • 24-hour on-site monitoring • Same day set-up
- 99% uptime & 30 day money-back guarantee



9Net ONE Plan £19.95/mo.

- 25 MB of disc space • 10 POP3 mailboxes • 1500 MB of monthly data transfer, £.05 over
- CGI library (counters, mailto forms, etc.) • SSI PGP ASP MIME Support • Dedicated Real audio/video server • Detailed Web Usage Statistics • Access to raw log files



9Net PRO plan £49.95/mo. (Reseller Program)

- 100 MB of disc space • 25 POP3 mailboxes • All features of 9 Net One Plan Plus:
- Dedicated secure server (SSL) • Cybercash and VeriSign support • Full ODBC support
- MS SQL, MS Access • Shopping Cart • 5000 MB of monthly data transfer, £.05 over
- Unlimited Domains with unique IP addresses (www.yourcustomer.com)



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Park Your Domain
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CALL FOR 3 MONTHS FREE HOSTING!

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www.9netavenue.co.uk



9NETAVENUE



Computers are no longer needed when it comes to affairs of the heart in Jenny and Darren's house

dating agency is for cowards: "It's not the wimps' option by any means. It takes a lot of effort to go through with something like this."

Brave hearts

It also takes a lot of courage – even today. The biggest problem many people face when they think about the Internet as a way to meet people is the potential stigma that comes with it. For those who may be thinking about using an online agency, it's worth noting that Darren and Jenny seemed to have encountered only the mildest of criticism. Some of Darren's friends may have raised eyebrows about the

way he met his new love, but overall the reaction was favourable: "There were one or two people who, even though they didn't say anything, you could tell that they thought it was a bit odd. But then there were more people who just thought it was really cool."

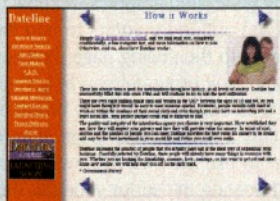
"Now that I've tried it and it's worked, several of my friends have decided to go down that route."

And there really isn't any reason why they shouldn't. It's worked for this couple, and Jenny even suggests it could be the shape of things to come: "More and more professional people are going to be doing this. It will probably end up as being the normal thing to do." □

Dateline

www.dateline.uk.com

The mother of all dating services, Dateline is a huge site and an excellent place to start looking. The search database is very easy to use.

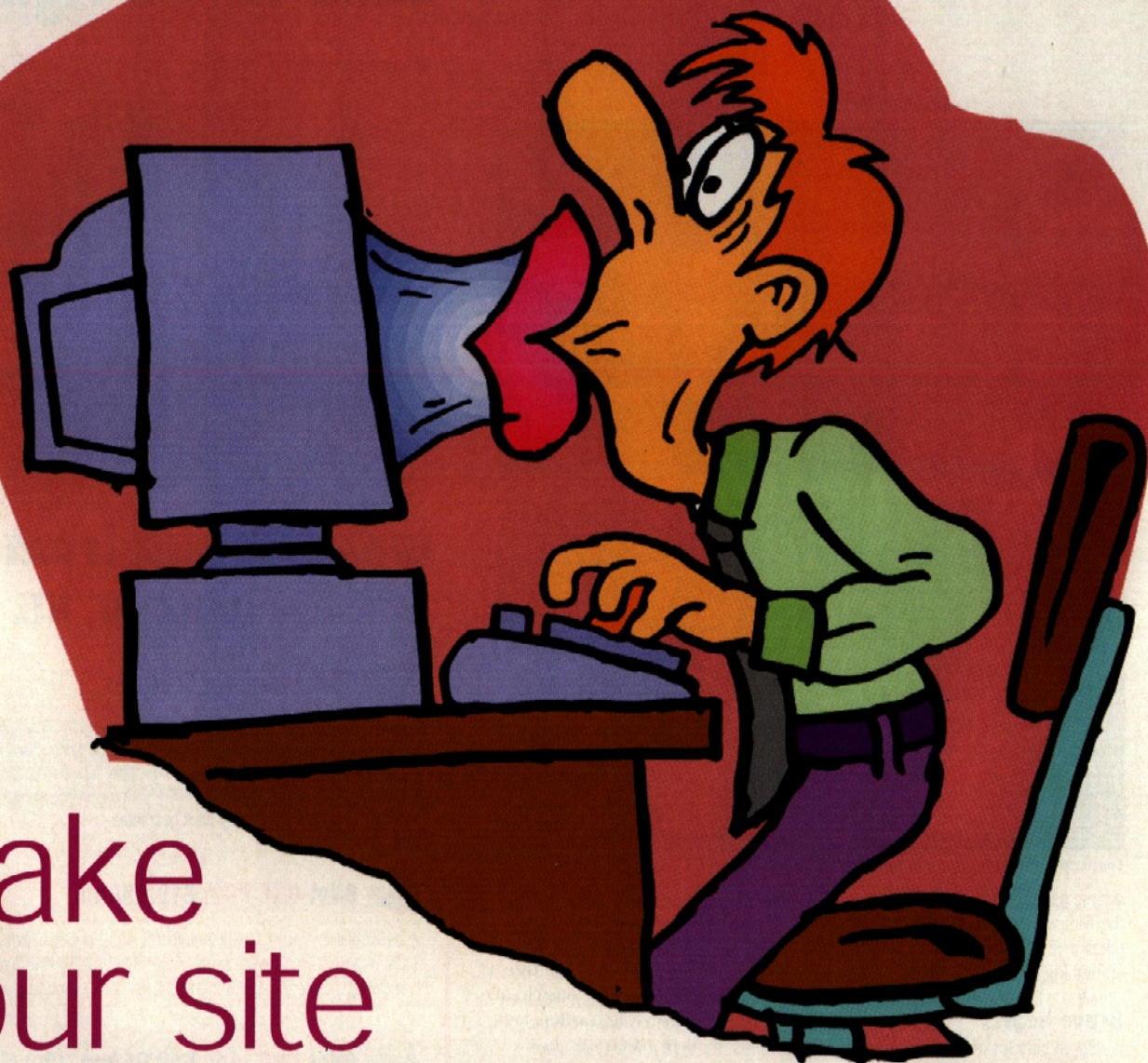


Venus Dating UK

www.venusdating.co.uk

A comprehensive, professional site for those interested in long-term relationships. Well designed, with free trials and a searchable database.





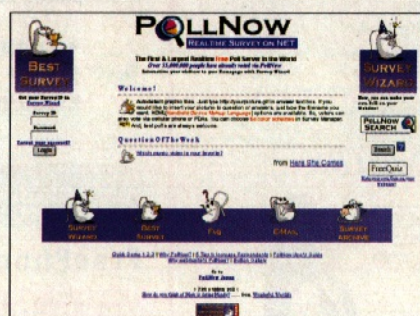
Make your site unforgettable!

James Seabright explains the best ways to make your Web site ooze with interactivity, a sure-fire way to keep visitors coming back for more

With more Web sites vying for attention every day, you've got to go the extra mile to grab the attention of visitors and make them want to bookmark your site and keep coming back.

Of course, the best way to do this is to provide useful content on your site in the first place. But if this isn't presented well, or it doesn't involve your visitors in something more interesting than clicking on links, you're unlikely to inspire a return visit. A whole range of

interactive add-ons can be found online, most of which are free. We've tracked down the very best and grouped them into ten sections over the next few pages. But remember, don't overdo the interactive features, and make sure they're relevant to your site before taking the plunge.



Joining the PollNow community is quick, easy and can help you find new visitors, as all polls are available directly from its site

Vote for victory

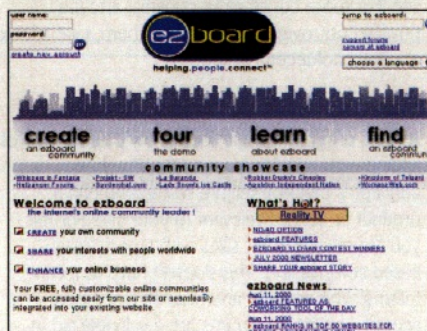
One of the most popular ways of encouraging site users to interact is by asking their opinion. This becomes a lot more interesting when they then find out what other site visitors think about the same subject, hence the widespread use of online polls and votes. These are quick and easy to install, although they do need to be changed regularly to maintain user interest.

PollNow (www.pollnow.com) makes it really simple to set up as many polls as you like, with automatically generated graphics to show the results, and the option for voters to add their own comments to the polling page. PollNow doesn't require any programming or scripting on your part, as the poll is actually based on the server and linked to from your page. If you would prefer to use the (more complicated) approach of hosting the script yourself, then you'll need the SurveySays script from

www.pingpackets.com/webapps/perl. First check that your Web space provider allows the use of Perl scripts through CGI, which is the feature you need to run scripts. Most free providers don't, although www.webjump.com is a notable exception.

It's good to chat

Online chat is a mixed blessing. It can be quite counterproductive to provide a free-for-all chat room through your site, unless you take active control by setting up specific times of day to host chats about particular issues relevant to your site. Signing up with Delphi Forums (www.delphi.com) is a great idea, as you get a free chat room for your site and you may also be featured on its pages.



As with most free resources, the price you pay is displaying ezboard's ads on your message board

Online message boards are a good alternative to chat rooms. Although they're nothing new, ezboard (www.ezboard.com) has managed to teach the old dog some new tricks. The enormous range of subject matter covered by the message boards already in existence means that everyone should be able to find a board of interest to them. Better still, anyone can create their own board – which can even be customised to look just like your home page design. As with chat rooms, it's important to keep the message board under control by regularly posting your own contributions and deleting or archiving old or irrelevant messages.

As with most free resources, the price you pay is displaying ezboard's ads on your message board. Unfortunately, the ad opt-out pricing is too expensive to make it worthwhile.

Feedback festival

The original interactive Web site feature is undoubtedly the humble guest book. Despite its ageing years, it still has its uses – it's always important to see what visitors have got to say about your site, and this is a great way of encouraging feedback. Take a look at the tutorial on page 80 of this issue on the YourCGI service at www.yourcgi.com, which explains how to install a basic guestbook in a matter of minutes.

Providing your email address is one way of encouraging home page visitors to contact you with site feedback. But why not make it even easier for people to contact you, by providing a fill-in form on your site? FormMailer (www.formmailer.net) will deal with the form for

you, converting its contents into an email message. One particularly useful feature of this service is that specific questions can be asked by creating multiple fill-in boxes. However complicated your form is, this service will handle it without any problems. You may want to combine this service with the tutorial on page 82 of this issue that covers the creation of forms.



FormMailer is one of the many free form services on the Net. Also worth considering are www.feedback.com and www.response-o-matic.com

Search for success

If your home page has got many different pages and sections, then there's a real risk that visitors will find it difficult to track down relevant information. Considering the amount of time you've put into extending your pages, this is probably the last thing you want to hear. But there is a solution to this problem, as it's now possible to set up a search engine that will scour your site for keywords entered by visitors. The free version of SearchButton (www.searchbutton.com) is funded by placing ad banners on search results pages.

Another option is Atomz (www.atomz.com). Free search engines don't normally offer quite as many customisable features and options as this, making Atomz first choice if you want your site to be keyword searchable. Even enormous commercial sites like Webmonkey (www.webmonkey.com) and O'Reilly have switched to Atomz, due to the sheer speed of the

system. Their sites show how it is possible to configure Atomz to display search results in keeping with the design of your site.



The advanced features of Atomz come completely free if your site has less than 500 pages

Email extra

Electronic mail is a brilliant way of staying in touch with your site visitors, and that doesn't have to mean the fairly standard approach of simply sending emails to known visitors updating them about the site (although www.listbot.com will do just that for free). There are some more original ways of using email, such as providing people with free Web-based email accounts based at your site.

Put simply, ZapZone Network allows you to set up your very own Web-based email service with customised email addresses. This means that you can really impress visitors with what your site has to offer, by providing them with a free email address that will remind them of your site every time they use it. This service could also be useful if you are running a family home page, and want to have email addresses for each family member. Find out more by visiting the ZapZone pages at www.zzn.com.

Customer service is of particular interest to commercial sites – there's nothing more frustrating than not getting a reply to an emailed enquiry. To avoid your company's reputation being tarnished in this way, have GetResponse send an automatic reply by signing up for its service at www.getresponse.com.

TAKING CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS

IF YOU'RE SETTING UP an online store on your Web site, it's pretty much essential to offer credit card facilities. They make the sale much easier than requesting people to send a cheque, and customers feel happier to purchase online using a credit card due to the insurance and security features offered by their card issuer. Verza (www.verza.com) is one of the quickest and easiest ways of starting to provide credit card services on your Web site. Different commission rates and terms apply to 'virtual' and 'real' goods. Another highly recommended credit card handler is WorldPay (www.worldpay.com) who has packages for companies with and without credit card merchant accounts already in place.



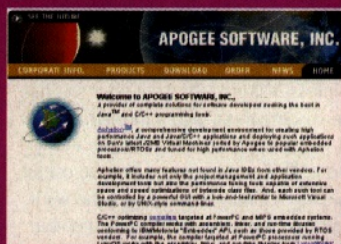
Verza (www.verza.com) is an excellent place to start if you want to add credit card services to your Web site



Make your site unforgettable!

ONLINE STORE DIY IT'S VERY EASY TO ADD FACILITIES TO EXISTING SITES

JOINING THE ECOMMERCE revolution doesn't have to involve lots of complicated Web page coding. Many solution packages are out there to make things a lot easier. There are many Web sites that will help you add online ordering features to an existing Web site. Be careful to ensure that the one you choose is set up for working with UK



companies, such as www.apogee.com. Apogee has a range of different packages on offer, including a 14-day free trial of the popular Miva Merchant solution, or a completely free single secure page for more simple online stores. Software solutions worth considering include ecBuilder (www.ecbuilder.com) and Actinic (www.actinic.co.uk). See this issue's Web Builder News on page 18 for more information on the latest versions of these particular packages.

Link and prosper

It's quite easy to while away many a day promoting your home page to all the search engines, user groups and award sites that you can track down. The problem with that sort of publicity is that you will only reach people who are actively looking around on the Web for sites covering a particular subject. If you were somehow able to tap into the vast numbers of other Web users, then your site might start getting floods of visitors.

Junk mail is definitely not the answer – instead, you should make it as easy as possible for people who like your site to recommend it to others. This way, you will be activating the best means of publicity there is: word of mouth.

A recommendation button, which allows visitors to comment on your site and fire off an email to specified friends, can be added to your site in minutes using a nifty free service at www.recommend-it.com. Fill in a simple form and you'll be given all the HTML code and graphics you need to set up the system on your site in no time!



In the virtual world of the Net, it's a relief to find a traditional 'word of mouth' tool like www.recommend-it.com

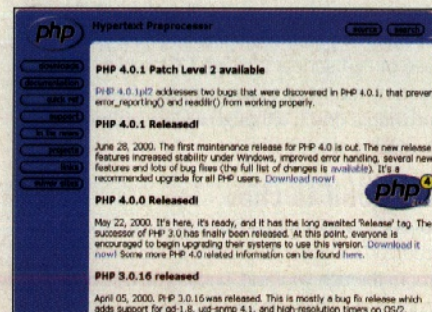
Another popular option is to join a Web ring, which is a network of sites that cover similar subject matter and are linked together by a common banner at the bottom of the page, allowing visitors to visit each site in turn or see a list of all sites on that ring. Head for www.webring.org if you're interested in joining one.

Getting personal

Although most people want as many visitors as possible, you may want to password-protect sections of a site. For instance, you might have an online family photo album that you only want friends and relatives to see. With the help of www.fido7.com/free-cgi/auth, up to ten different usernames and passwords can be created to control access to specific pages. But watch out, as some free Web providers, such as Geocities, don't allow any password protection of pages.

To achieve the level of customisation reached by sites like Amazon (www.amazon.com), you need to devote many hours to scripting and developing your system. The most accessible way of doing this is through PHP (www.php3.org), which is a Hypertext Preprocessor that can identify whether a known user is accessing a page and then customise it accordingly.

If you're not keen to delve quite that deep into programming, it's possible to achieve some



If you're serious about site personalisation, PHP is the way forward, and it's now available in a feature-packed version four!

personalisation with cookies, which make it easier to identify particular users when they access your site. For more coverage of cookies, and the privacy controversy surrounding them, take a look at www.cookiecentral.com.

Affiliate and conquer

Affiliate programs are an incredibly popular way of adding extra sparkle to your site. The basic concept is that you feature or recommend a product or service relevant to your site. For this, you are rewarded for sales with a percentage-based commission. This doesn't have to mean turning your site into an online bazaar. Used sensibly, affiliate programs are a valuable aid in building a compelling site.

Online greetings cards are a very popular way of sending good wishes across the miles on special occasions. Thanks to the eCards affiliate program (www.ecardsexpress.com), it's now easy for any site to feature them by simply adding some provided HTML code to a page. Better still, you can also earn referral credit (that means money) for every card that is sent from your site. New and popular cards will automatically appear as they become available, meaning that your site will never look out of date.

The more traditional affiliate program approach relates to actual products rather than online services. Affinia (www.affinia.com) is one of the latest entrants into the 'build your own storefront' trend that is currently engulfing affiliate schemes everywhere, and makes it incredibly simple to start offering products from many different suppliers on your Web pages, and to make a tidy profit if your store is a success.

By adding a bit of interactivity to your site, your visitors will start to feel more involved, and will encourage them to return to your site. □



Let your site's visitors send their wishes across the electronic airwaves with the help of the eCards affiliate scheme

THE INCLUSIVE BUSINESS PACKAGE

INCLUSIVE

Technical Support

7 days a week - your business will always have help to hand. Our dedicated technical support team is there to help.

INCLUSIVE

Lan connectivity

A fast, 128k digital dial-on-demand service provides full, simultaneous Internet access for staff. Being dial-on-demand, you only pay when you are using the service - a local rate call*

* A 64k connection is a local rate call. 128k connections are two 0845 local calls bonded together.

INCLUSIVE

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25Mb of Web space within your domain (<http://www.yourcompany.co.uk>) is allocated for your business use (subject to the operating terms and conditions on our Web Site).



INCLUSIVE

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Every employee in your company will have their own e-mail address.

INCLUSIVE

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Routers are configured to each individual customer's requirements. In addition, an integrated firewall protects your network from intruders.

INCLUSIVE

Domain name registration

Unique domain name to identify your company (yourcompany.co.uk).

WEB DESIGN

Option

To complete your Business Package, a bespoke design service is available to promote your company, product and services on the Web.



The Enterprise Business Package offers everything to get you onto the Web, including hardware, a unique domain

name (yourcompany.co.uk - subject to availability) and infinite e-mail addresses.

Connecting to the Internet via Enterprise could not be more straightforward. We take care of the technical issues to ensure your Internet LAN service is on-line as seamlessly and as quickly as possible. To find out how you can benefit from the Enterprise Business Package contact our sales staff on our

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great guides

buying your disk

the fine art of surfing

finding your way

Tutorials

BEGINNER TUTORIALS

If you're new to the Net, our beginner tutorials will show you the way

MSN Messenger 3.0 70

Enter the world of instant messaging with this latest version of MSN Messenger. It allows you to send messages to your pals in real-time, with none of the delay that you usually get with an email message

INTERMEDIATE TUTORIALS

These guides are ideal for the more experienced user

PowerNet 2000 72

Simultaneously browse as many sites as you want using PowerNet 2000

Online Favourites 73

Set up an Online Favourites account to store your Favorites

ADVANCED TUTORIAL

Old hands can sharpen their skills in our advanced section

FileMaker Pro 5 76

Make sure you keep your site's data in order by publishing databases online. This program is really handy if you have a large site that requires lots of upkeep as you can easily update your content

HOME IMPROVEMENT

How to make your Web site stand out from the rest

Canvas 7 78

You can easily set up a snazzy graphical home page using Canvas 7

YourCGI 80

Add some interaction to your site with the YourCGI service

Anfy 81

Add Java special effect applets to your site using the Anfy package from the cover CD

Intelligent fill-in forms 82

Use JavaScript to verify that your site's fill-in forms have been correctly completed

Advice

Q&A 87

Clive Parker sorts out your problems at our Internet helpdesk

Web page Q&A 91

All your home page hassles are sorted by James Seabright



Design doctor 91

Designs on life for your home page

INSIDE NET WORKSHOP

LOOKING TO BUILD a fantastic Web site or add some pizzazz to your Web surfing? This is the hands-on section of the magazine where we help you turn those thoughts into reality. Over the next few few pages, we'll explain clearly and precisely how to use the latest Internet software and HTML code to create the results you want.

Practical Internet is always keen to get feedback from readers, so if you like a particular tutorial or would like to see a subject or program covered here, send us an email at pi@paragon.co.uk.



Get gabbin' on the Net!

How to: Get into the world of instant messaging with MSN Messenger 3.0 on this month's CD

BEGINNER TUTORIAL



on the CD

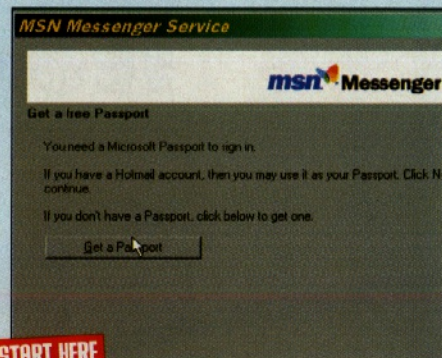
You can find MSN Messenger on this month's Practical Internet CD

IF, LIKE US, your entire life is conducted around the speedy world of email, you'll probably find yourself pressing CTRL + M to check for new email in Outlook Express at an alarming rate. Even when your mates can be bothered to send you a mail, there's often an irritating time lag while the message hangs around the ether, waiting to connect up to your server.

Wouldn't it be great if you could just talk to your buds via your PC, real-time, with none of that nasty

delay action? Well, with MSN Messenger and a whole host of similar programs, this is exactly what you can do. Forget about waiting for a message to get to you – sign up for an account and a world of instantaneous textual communication is yours. What's more, you can even send files and talk in real-time video as well.

It couldn't be simpler. Follow our easy steps below to get yourself on to the MSN Messenger service.



START HERE

1

Install MSN Messenger

When you come to install MSN Messenger 3.0, you'll need a Microsoft Passport to sign in. If you've got a Hotmail account, you can use this. Otherwise, click on the 'Get a passport' button to set one up. To do this, you'll need to be connected to the Internet.



2

Configure your Passport

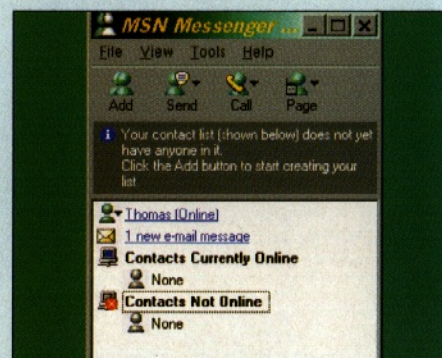
Enter your details to create your Passport/Hotmail account. Because Hotmail is popular, you might find that you don't get your hands on your first choice username. Select one of the alternatives and click through to go back to the installation process.



3

Installing and signing in

When you are returned to the Installer, click 'Next'. You'll be asked for your sign-in details and password. Type in your username followed by '@hotmail.com' then your password. Once you've done this, you only have to select 'Finish', then you'll be logged in.



4

The MSN screen

This is the main MSN Messenger screen. Although it is small and looks basic, most of the functions can be accessed from here. At the moment, we're working with a totally blank board, so let's add a name to our contacts list. Click on the 'Add' button in the top-left.



5

Add a contact

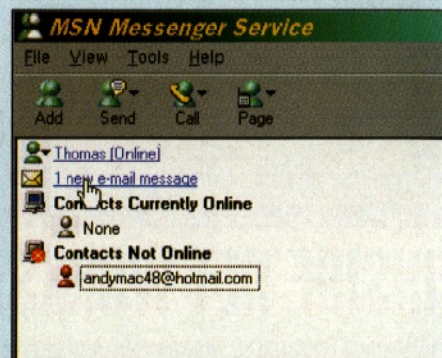
To add a contact, you can either enter the email address of the lucky person, or search for his or her details on the Microsoft Network. Because the service is very US-biased, it's always best here if you can go straight to the email address itself.



6

Email your contact

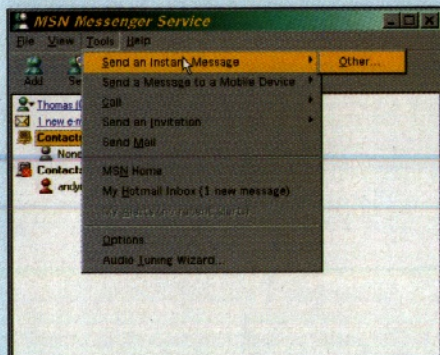
If you want to email your new contact, just press the 'Email' button before finishing. Here, you can tell your mate that you're on the fabulous MSN service. When you've done this, click on 'Send' and then choose 'Finish' to go back to the main screen.



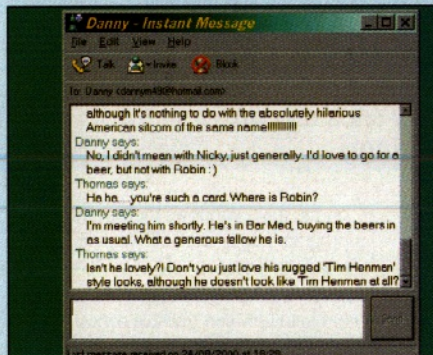
7

Picking up Hotmail

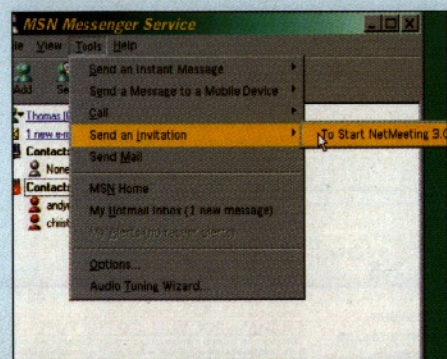
Whenever you have new mail in Hotmail, it's easy to pick it up using MSN Messenger. Just like using Outlook Express, the program will display how many new messages there are for you when they arrive. Just click on the link to view each message in turn.

**8 Instant messaging**

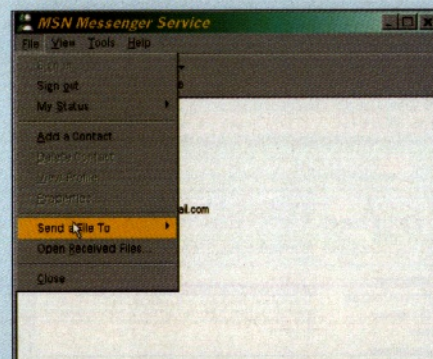
It's all well and good messing about with Hotmail, but we want to use some of the more immediate features of MSN Messenger. To send an instant message, go to 'Tools', then 'Send an Instant Message'. You can only instant message people when they're online.

**9 Send an instant message**

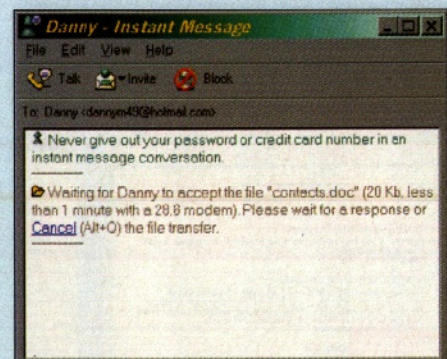
Now you've set it up, you can get to work chatting away. Type your message to send in the bottom text box, and you'll see it appear in the upper box. Your online friend will see the same, and when he/she enters a message, it will appear in the top box too, just like a dialogue.

**10 Inviting to a NetMeeting**

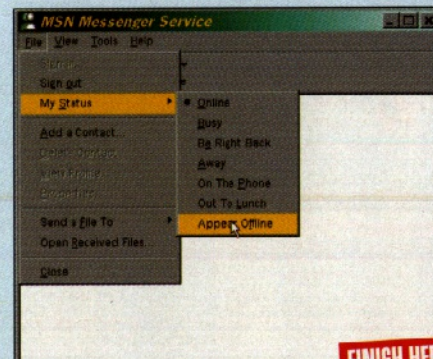
If you've installed the latest version of IE5.5 and have managed to get your hands on a Webcam, you might as well make the most of everything. Go to 'Tools', 'Send an Invitation', and this will invite your Net buddy to indulge in some real-time video communication.

**11 Send a file**

If you want to start getting clever with MSN Messenger, you can send files across the Web instantly. Just select 'File', 'Send a File To', and select your lucky recipient. This will transfer the file to them instantly, even more quickly than if you sent it by email.

**12 Your file**

Now you can browse for your file on your hard drive. When you find it, click 'OK', and this screen will appear. This tells you that you're waiting on the recipient to accept the file, and once they have, the dialog box will tell you so.

**FINISH HERE****13 Disguise your intentions**

Although your status is designed to let people know when to contact you, you might want to go further, or even disguise when you're online. To do this, go to 'File', 'My Status', then choose the status you wish. If you want to hide from people, choose 'Appear Offline'.

ONLINE RESOURCES**www.msn.co.uk**

You want news and information on the whole gamut of Microsoft Network goodies? You could do a lot worse than getting down to the official MSN site. Here, you'll find just that.

www.lcq.com

If you don't fancy MSN Messenger as your real-time chat client, give this a try. It's very popular amongst the youngsters these days, and even has enough features to keep you going.

http://chat.yahoo.com

Bored of talking to the same person all the time? Want to talk in a room with loads of people? This might just be the job for you, although you might find yourself cursing at the slightly US bias of everyone involved.

TOP TIP!

When you sign into MSN Messenger, tick the 'Remember password' box to save you having to remember and type it in every time. If you know that one of your mates is online, you don't want to have any extra delays in getting in touch with them.

**JARGON BUSTER****? Instant message**

A message that is sent and received instantly. It lets you communicate with someone far away by means of a textual dialogue.

? Contact

In MSN Messenger, a person whose details you have, ready to be contacted whenever you wish to speak to them. This works in the same way as a contacts book.

? Passport

A way of allowing you to go into the Microsoft Network by entering only your password. With this, you can lie in your Hotmail account sign-up details along with the rest of your MSN information.

Easy multiple browsing

How to: Simultaneously browse as many sites as you want using the tab system in PowerNet 2000

INTERMEDIATE TUTORIAL



on the CD
You can find PowerNet 2000 on this month's Practical Internet CD

AS YOUR COMMON or garden PC grows ever more powerful, the opportunity to lose yourself in a myriad of Web pages increases. That mighty processor tempts you too often into the trap of multiple page openings in Internet Explorer. Before you know it, there are eight windows lying open, causing all kinds of problems.

What you need is to get your hands on PowerNet 2000. Instead of the traditional Explorer method of storing all of your open windows

on the main Windows toolbar, this program keeps them all within its simple interface.

Using a tab system, you can navigate between multiple pages. You need to keep ten different Web pages open at the same time? Well, worry not, for with PowerNet 2000 your interface will remain as clean as a baby's bottom with the aid of new design Pampers. Whatever you want to view, you can keep it tabbed at the top of the PowerNet interface, ready to be picked up on.

JARGON BUSTER



Tab

A small box which sticks up out of a window to allow you to see a description of the contents, even when it is not open. Basically, in PowerNet, this works in the same way as tabs on your old-fashioned business cards.



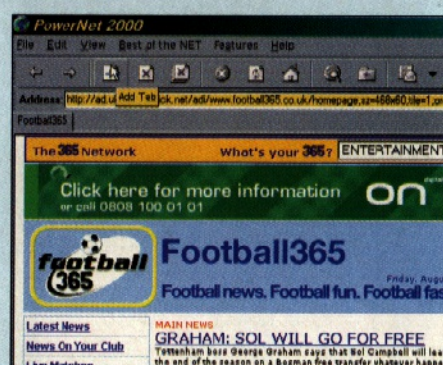
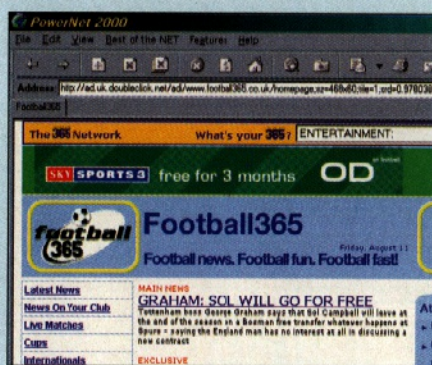
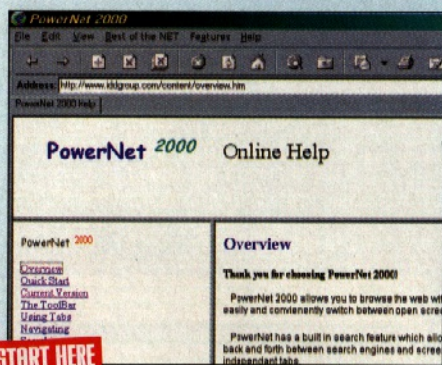
Toolbar

A section of the screen containing all of the main tools and options for the program. In Windows, the toolbar sits at the bottom of the page, and has all of your window details, as well as your system tray.



URL - Universal Resource Locator

The method employed on the Web of specifying addresses, allowing you to move from one Web site to the other.



1

The PowerNet Interface

When you open up PowerNet 2000, this is the interface you'll find. Notice that the screen is split into various sections, with the tabs sitting just underneath the toolbar and address bar. You'll see that the screen looks very much like a cut-down version of Internet Explorer.

2

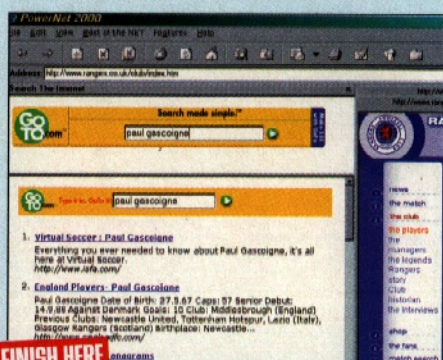
Open up a page

What with the Internet Explorer-style interface and back end, you won't be surprised to learn that navigating to a new address involves nothing more than typing in a URL in the address bar. We're going down the football news theme, so we've gone to football365 to start with.

3

Add a tab

Now we can start adding to our tabs. To do this, just click on the 'Plus' sign in the toolbar. This performs the same task as opening a new window in Internet Explorer, only doesn't involve fiddling about with multiple windows, or ever having to leave the interface.



4

More tabs

Once you've opened up a page in the window, you can set to work creating a nice collection of tabs and pages - we've gone for five. Having done this, try moving between pages using the tabs, and you'll notice how considerably easier it is than having to use the Internet Explorer style.

5

Killing a tab

Obviously when you've got a good few tabs open, you might find that you have to get rid of the occasional one. This is very easy to do, and involves nothing more than right-clicking on the tab itself and selecting 'Kill Tab'.

6

Search in PowerNet 2000

To search in PowerNet, just click on the 'Search' icon in the toolbar, recognisable by its similarity to the one seen in Internet Explorer. You'll see that your tabs still stay open despite the opening of the search window, although they squeeze in to fit the available space.

Find your fave sites fast

How to: Set up an Online Favourites account to store your favourite Web site addresses and access them from any PC in the world

INTERMEDIATE TUTORIAL

IT'S EASY TO spend ages configuring your home PC. Browser settings are no different, and everyone sets up their version of Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator slightly differently.

Even if you touch the settings on your computer as often as Russell Grant reaching for a low-fat yogurt, the one element you're always likely to tinker with is the Favorites section. Unless you're crazy, you'll be bookmarking pages left, right and centre, ensuring you don't

have to spend ages having to find that perfect site. Although this is great when you're online at home, it's not much use when you're at work, or using another PC.

If you go to Online Favourites, however, you can solve this problem. It lets you save, store and call up your favourite links from anywhere. All you have to do is visit the Online Favourites Web site, type in the URL to save and give it a description. Now you have an online catalogue of your best sites.



START HERE

1

Go to the Online Favourites site

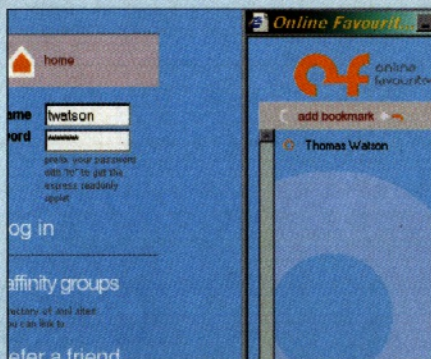
First up, we need to get down to the Online Favourites Web site at www.onlinefavourites.com. Immediately, you'll see the main functions of the page, with the Log In and Sign-up buttons easy to find. We need to register before anything else, so click on the 'Register' button.



2

Register your information

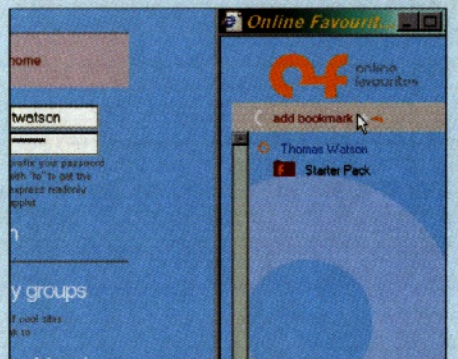
Enter your information in the spaces provided. Try to think of a username that's unlikely to be used by anyone else, or you'll only be brought back to this screen. Click 'OK', then 'Accept the Terms and Conditions' on the next screen to complete the registration process.



3

Log in

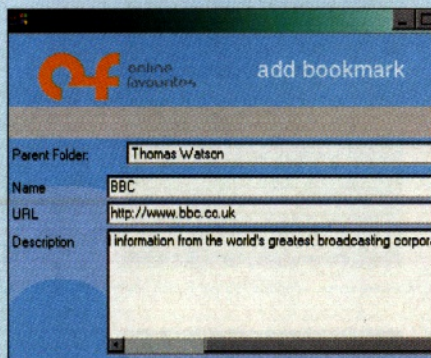
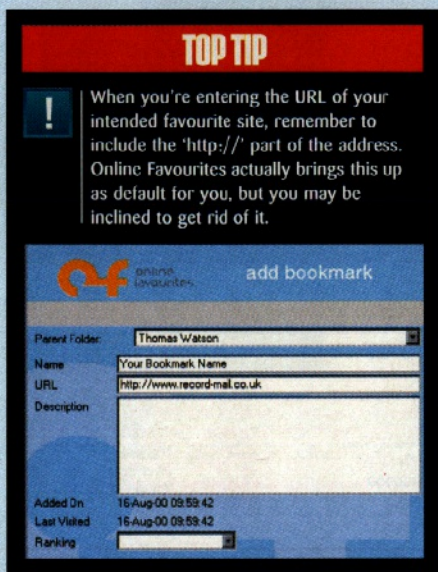
Now, whenever you wish to log in, you only have to press the 'Log in' button, and type your username and password in the spaces provided. This will bring up your Favourites applet, where you can really get to work on organising your online faves.



4

Add a Bookmark

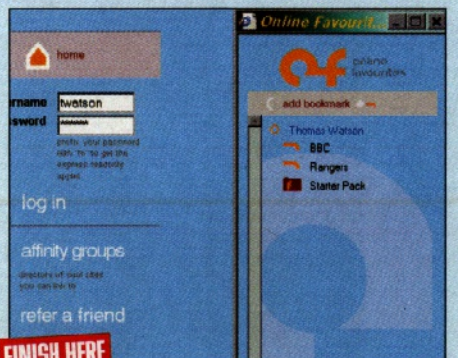
To start adding a Bookmark, you'll have to click on the 'Add bookmark' button. One thing to remember at this stage, though, is that you have to double click to bring up an option in the applet, a snippet of info that should make your life considerably easier.



5

Bookmark details

In the Bookmark dialog box that appears, type in a name for the site, as well as the URL itself. If you're feeling crazy, you can even enter some information on the site underneath, and rank it. Double-click on 'OK' to store the bookmark.



FINISH HERE

6

Save your Bookmarks

You'll see that your Bookmark has an exclamation mark next to it in the applet. This is because it isn't yet saved properly. To save it for posterity, double-click on 'Save', and you'll be able to find this link anytime you ever visit Online Favourites.

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Origin Series



Specifications

	Origin D700GFX	Origin 750E	Origin 900DDR	Origin 1000GTS
Processor	AMD Duron™ processor 700MHz	AMD Athlon™ processor 750MHz	AMD Athlon™ processor 900MHz	AMD Athlon™ processor 1GHz
Memory	128MB SDRAM	128MB SDRAM	128MB SDRAM	256MB SDRAM
Hard Disk	20GB UDMA66 with buffer	20GB UDMA66 with buffer	30GB Maxtor 7200rpm UDMA66 with 2MB buffer	40GB Maxtor 7200rpm UDMA66 with 2MB buffer
Graphics	32MB nVIDIA GeForce 256	32MB nVIDIA TNT2 M64	32MB nVIDIA GeForce 256 DDR with TV-out	64MB nVIDIA GeForce2 GTS with TV-out
Monitor	17" Mitsubishi Natural Flat	17" evesham	19" evesham	19" Taxan Ergovision 985 NF TC099
Multimedia	DVD-ROM/CD-RW (combined drive)	DVD-ROM/CD-RW (combined drive)	DVD-ROM/CD-RW (combined drive)	8x DVD-ROM
Modem	56k v90 modem	56k v90 modem	56k v90 modem	56k v90 modem
Storage	CD-RW (as part of combined drive)	CD-RW (as part of combined drive)	CD-RW (as part of combined drive)	CD-RW
Sound Card	SoundBlaster compatible	SoundBlaster PCI 128 value wavetable	SoundBlaster Live! 1024 (OEM)	SoundBlaster Live! 1024 (OEM)
Speakers	Soundworks SBS52	Soundworks SBS52	FourPointSurround	FourPointSurround
Standard Features	2xUSB ports, 3.5" floppy disk drive, Midi-tower case, Windows '98 Ultratouch keyboard, Logitech wheel mouse, DVD movie playback software, CD creation & copy software.			
Price	(£959) £1126.83	(£959) £1126.83	(£1349) £1585.08	(£1899) £2231.33



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Origin D700GFX
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"Solid performance and an
impressive attention to
detail. A good all-rounder."
Origin 750E
June 2000



"A very fast PC with
a lot going for it."
Origin 900DDR
April 2000



"If you're looking for
the fastest PC we've
ever tested, here it is."
Origin 1000GTS
July 2000

All systems and upgrades are subject to availability. Prices correct at date of publication. Price and specifications subject to change without notice. evesham.com's Terms and Conditions apply and are available on request. evesham.com is a division of Evesham Micros Ltd. evesham.com, Dublin, is an independent company registered in Ireland, registration number 289678. Actual products may not match photographic representations. On-site warranty applies to UK mainland only (this does not include Isle of Man or Isle of Wight), and covers monitor and base unit only. Upgrade to warranty available to customers in Northern Ireland, 2 years cover for £100+VAT. Reviews and awards have been attributed to these systems with their previous names. Featured systems are based upon the original award winning specification. Bundled versions of video cards, sound cards and software are not full retail packs, and the software features on-line documentation. Cards with TV out functions provide composite video output not RF output. All DVD-ROM drives are supplied set to region 2. We do not support the use of other regions on evesham PCs. You will require special permission to copy CDs that are copyright. Industry standard practice is to quote a monitor's CRT size - the actual viewing area is approximately 1" less. Hard disk capacities are quoted in thousands of millions of bytes (as is standard industry practice) and are prior to installation of operating systems and other applications. As part of our staff training some telephone calls may be monitored. Intel, the Intel inside logo, Celeron, and Pentium III are trademarks of Intel Corporation. AMD, AMD Athlon and AMD Duron are trademarks of Advanced Micro Device. E&OE.

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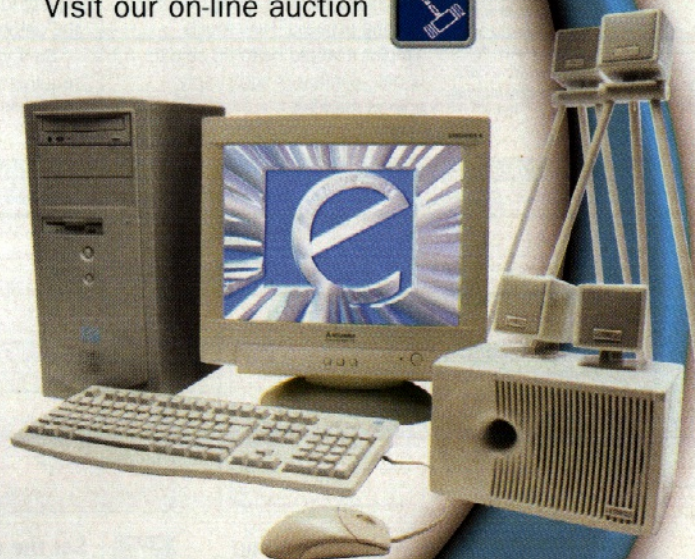
Software options - Visit our
web site or call for details



Visit our on-line auction



Evolution Series



Specifications

	Evolution C600	Evolution 650E	Evolution 733DDR	Evolution 800GTS
Processor	Intel® Celeron™ Processor 600MHz	Intel® Pentium® III Processor 650MHz	Intel® Pentium® III Processor 733MHz	Intel® Pentium® III Processor 800MHz
Memory	64MB SDRAM	128MB SDRAM	128MB SDRAM	256MB SDRAM
Hard Disk	10GB	20GB UDMA66 with buffer	30GB Maxtor 7200rpm UDMA66 with 2MB buffer	40GB Maxtor 7200rpm UDMA66 with 2MB buffer
Graphics	2D/3D with Direct AGP	32MB nVIDIA TNT2 M64	32MB nVIDIA GeForce 256 DDR with TV-out	32MB nVIDIA GeForce2 GTS
Monitor	15" evesham	17" evesham	17" Mitsubishi Natural Flat	19" Taxan Ergovision 985 NF TC099
Multimedia	32x CD-ROM	DVD-ROM/CD-RW (combined drive)	DVD ROM/CD-RW (combined drive)	8x DVD-ROM
Modem	56k v90 modem	56k v90 modem	56k v90 modem	56k v90 modem
Storage	Cost Option	CD-RW (as part of combined drive)	CD-RW (as part of combined drive)	CD-RW
Sound Card	SoundBlaster compatible	SoundBlaster compatible	SoundBlaster Live! 1024 (OEM)	SoundBlaster Live! 1024 (CEM)
Speakers	Zy-Fi	Soundworks SBS52	FourPointSurround	FourPointSurround
Standard Features	2xUSB ports, 3.5" floppy disk drive, Midi-tower case, Windows '98 Ultratouch keyboard, Logitech wheel mouse, DVD movie playback software (not included with Evolution C600), CD creation & copy software (Evolution 650E, 733DDR and 800GTS only), ChainTech Airbag software including Norton Anti-Virus.			
Price	(£577.87) £679	(£969) £1138.58	(£1249) £1467.58	(£1649) £1937.58



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the average user."
Evolution C600
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"Performance is well up
to the job. Put evesham
on the shortlist."
Evolution 650
Jan 2000



"A machine at the
top of the PC tree.
A great all-rounder."
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"evesham has pulled
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Evolution 800GTS
April 2000

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Publish a database online

How to: Keep your Web site information in order by publishing databases online using FileMaker Pro 5

ADVANCED TUTORIAL

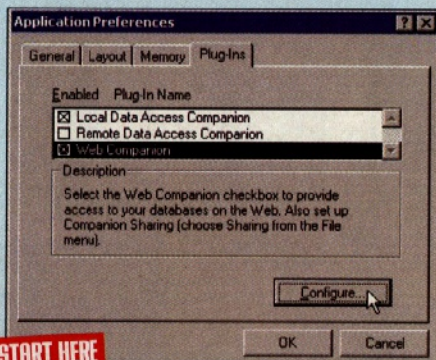


You can find a trial version of FileMaker Pro 5 on this month's Practical Internet CD

IT'S AN OBVIOUS thing to point out, but as your Web site gets larger and larger, so too does the amount of information you have to handle. Looking after large amounts of data on a Web site is a real problem, especially if you have to change things on a regular basis. Editing Web pages over and over is a time consuming and time wasting process. How much simpler it would be to be able to update databases and simply upload the files.

Well, with FileMaker Pro 5 you can do just that. You can create databases to your own specifications and then present them as data on Web sites. Using a simple password system, you can even log onto the database and add and delete data using your Web browser without even having to upload a new version of the database.

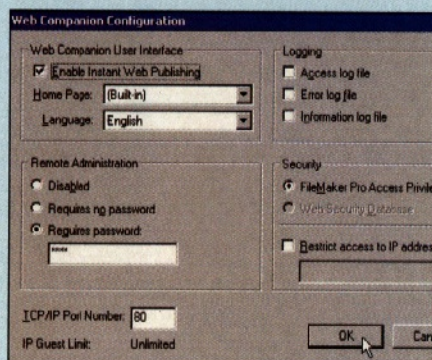
So if you have a site that requires you to modify data on a daily basis, get into databases.



START HERE

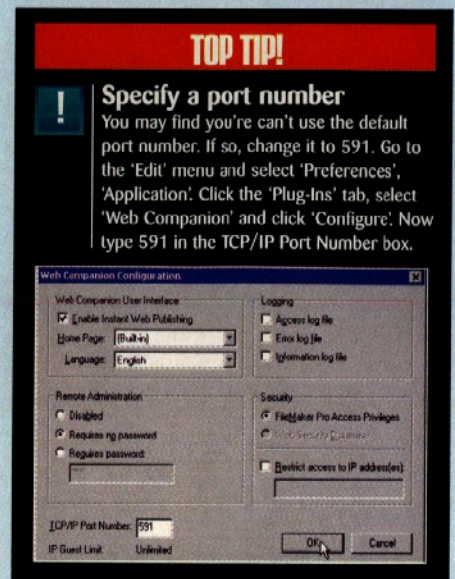
1 Configure the Web Companion

After opening FileMaker Pro 5, go to the 'Edit' menu, select 'Preferences' and choose 'Application' from the sub-menu. When this dialog opens, click the 'Plug-Ins' tab. Now select 'Web Companion' in the Plug-Ins window and then click the 'Configure' button.



2 Set the configuration

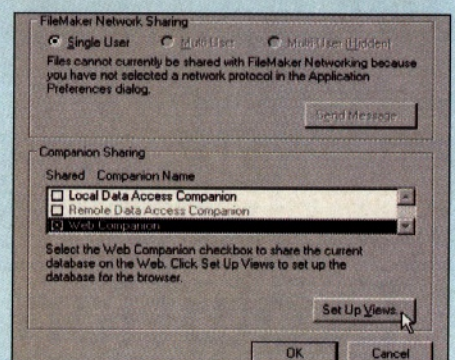
Make sure Enable Instant Web Publishing is enabled and choose the default home page. Set up your remote administration options and enter a password if required, it's usually a good idea to do so. Choose your other configuration options and click the 'OK' button.



TOP TIP!

Specify a port number

You may find you can't use the default port number. If so, change it to 591. Go to the 'Edit' menu and select 'Preferences', 'Application'. Click the 'Plug-Ins' tab, select 'Web Companion' and click 'Configure'. Now type 591 in the TCP/IP Port Number box.



3 Enable Web Companion sharing

To publish a database on the Web, open the database in FileMaker Pro and then go to the 'File' menu and select the 'Sharing' command. In the File Sharing dialog box, go to the Companion Sharing section and select the 'Web Companion' checkbox. Now click the 'Set Up Views' button.

ONLINE RESOURCES

www.filemaker.com

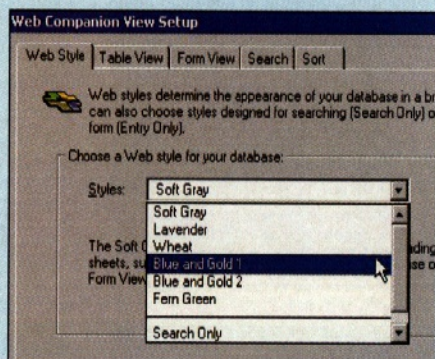
The best place for you to find out more about FileMaker Pro is the official Web site where you can join support groups, look up FAQs and get developer information.

www.oingo.com/topic/188/188599.html

Lots of online database related information on the Oingo Web site including a realm of FileMaker Pro information.

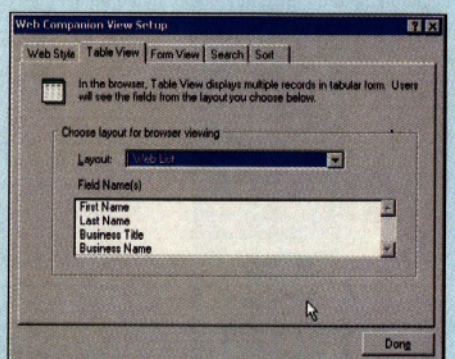
www.zdnet.com/products/special/current/Webdata.html

For links to even more Web sites on online databases you could do worse than visit this ZDNet Web page.



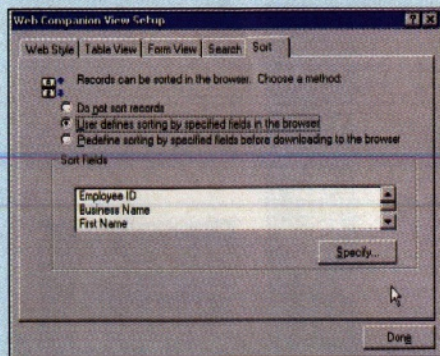
4 Set up browser views

You can set up your database to display different views in a Web browser. These are the Table View that shows several records; the Form View for working on individual records; a Search page to find records and a Sort page. In the Web Companion View Setup, select a style.



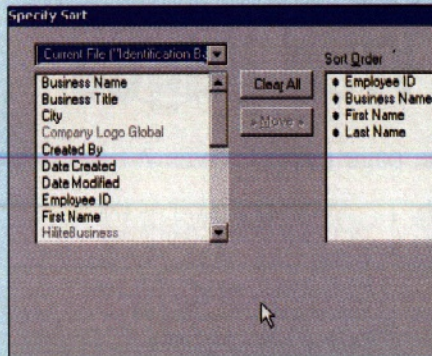
5 Choose a layout

To select a layout for a Web page, click on the 'Table View', 'Form View' or 'Search' tabs. Remember that the layout used for Form View is also used for New Record and Edit Record pages. For the other views, specify the layout you want to use.



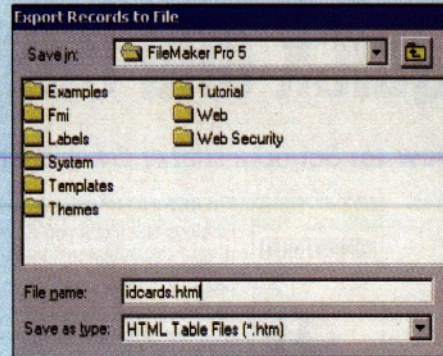
6 Set sort options

Click on the 'Sort' tab on the Web Companion View Setup dialog and choose whether you want to disable sorting, let the user define how data is sorted or predefine sorting in advance. To predefine the sorting options, click on the 'Specify' button.



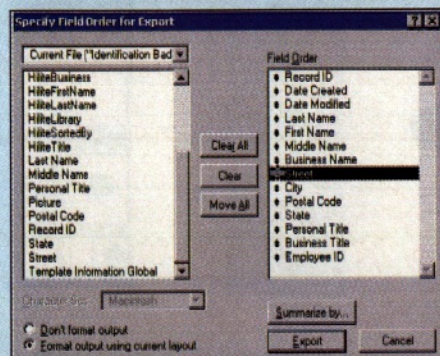
7 Predefined sorting

In the Specify Sort dialog, use the window on the left to select which fields you want to use for sorting. Once you have selected a field, you should use the 'Add' button to add it to the list on the right. Items will be sorted according to the order listed.



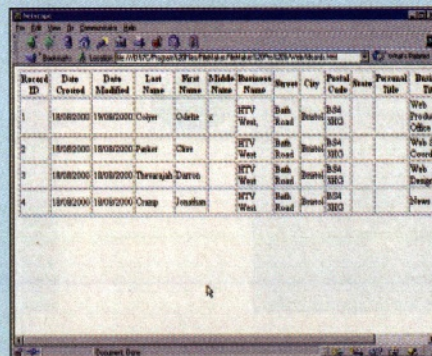
8 Export static files

To view the database, type in the static IP address of your PC into your Web browser. If you want to create static Web pages, go to 'File' and select 'Export'. When the file selector box appears, select 'HTML' in the Save As Type... box. Type in a file name and click 'Save'.



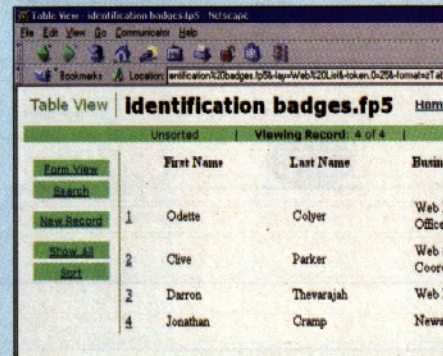
9 Save it in order

In the Specify Field Order for Export dialog, choose the fields you want to include in your exported Web pages. You can use the Add and Remove buttons to select fields and you can use the up and down arrows to move items in the order. When ready, click the 'Export' button.



10 A dull static page

As you can see, creating your data as a flat HTML page has particularly dull and uninteresting results. Although all the data is there, it's not interactive in any way and there's no way that you can modify any data in the file.



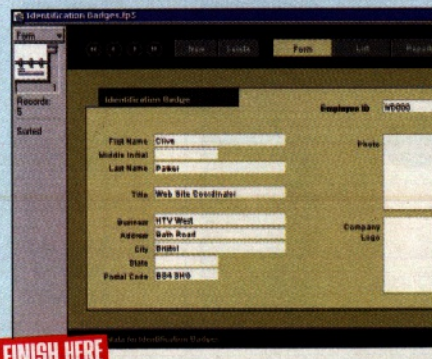
11 Get interactive

View the built-in Web page using Web Instant Publishing by typing your PC's static IP address. You will be presented with the same data but with HTML links so you can modify the data. Using the list of options on the left, click on the 'New Record' link.



12 Add a new record

When the New Record page appears (shown above), you can add details to all fields in exactly the same way as if you were using FileMaker Pro 5 itself. Just fill in the fields and click on the 'Submit' link on the left.



13 Any design you like

In this tutorial we've used one of the templates supplied, but it's dead easy to create your own templates and forms. An ideal use for this kind of database is for sharing information on an office intranet, with one person updating information for the rest of the team to access.

JARGON BUSTER

Web Companion
A plug-in for FileMaker Pro that works as a Web server on your PC. This enables you to view and edit FileMaker databases using your Web browser.

Static IP Address
In order to use FileMaker Pro databases using TCP/IP protocols, you must set up your PC with a static IP address. The FileMaker Pro help files show you how to do this.

Remote Administration
Using the Web security features of FileMaker Pro, you can set up your online database to be viewed by anyone but it can only be edited by using a password.

Quick and easy Web pages

How to: Set up a snazzy graphical home page using Canvas 7

HOME IMPROVEMENT



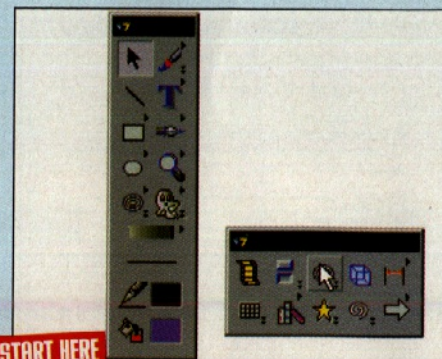
on the CD

You can find a trial version of Canvas 7 on this month's Practical Internet CD

THERE'S NO USE being part of this fabulous Net age if you're going to design a Web site that looks like a dog's dinner. To impress people, you need something a bit jazzy – some nice pictures might help attract people's attention.

In this tutorial, we're using Canvas 7, a fully-featured graphics editing and creation package. You can set up all kinds of crazy graphics effects using this program, and it's all there for you in an easy-to-use interface.

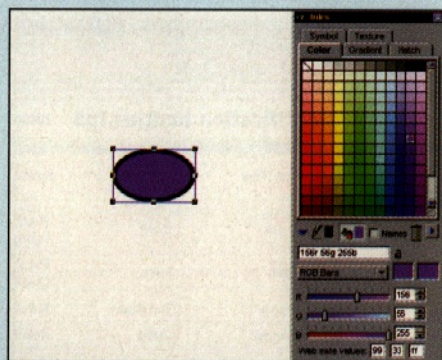
Dropping in images from either the Canvas clip art CD or from your own source is a doddle, too. What's more, with a much higher level of control over the way you create graphics than with a traditional WYSIWYG page designer, you can choose exactly the look you want for your site. Once you've sorted out the graphics, buttons and text, Canvas will save it all for you as an HTML file, meaning you can upload it to your Web space there and then.



1

Open up Canvas

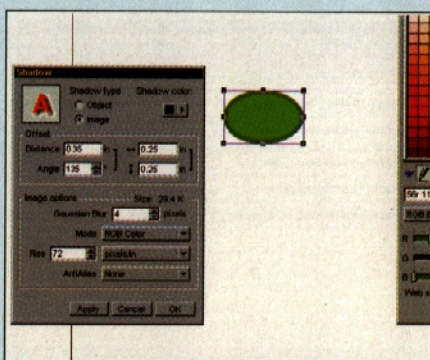
On opening Canvas, use the zoom buttons on the bottom-left to give you a view of 100%. Now click on the toolbar item that looks like a roll of film and double-click on the 'Concentric Circles' button on the bottom row. This will help us create a Web button.



2

Draw the basic button

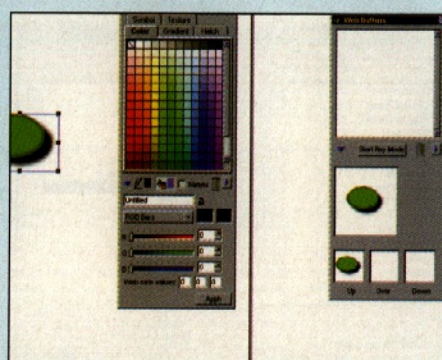
In the dialog box that appears, select five circles with one point spacing. This will help give our button more depth. Press 'OK', and draw an ellipse like ours on the page. Open up the Inks palette (if it's not open, choose 'Window', 'Palettes', 'Inks').



3

Colours and shadows

Using the Inks Palette, change the colour of both the outline and fill to look something like ours. Now go to 'Effects', 'Shadow' and select 'Image Shadow Type'. Give it a Gaussian blur of four, and press 'OK'. This will create a shadow for our button.



4

Our first button action

Move the shadow closer to the image, and select both using the shift key. Right-click and choose 'Group', then open the Web Buttons palette. Click on the arrow in the bottom-left, then drag your grouped button into the Up box.

ONLINE RESOURCES

www.jkinternet.com/freeclipart/bullets/index.html

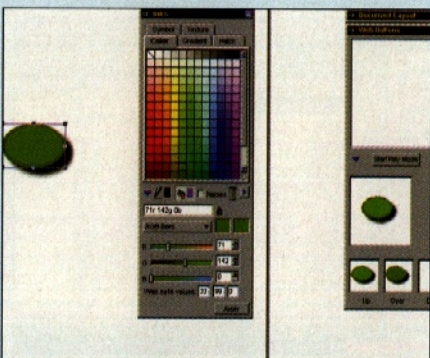
Visit this site, and you'll find that there's buttons galore for you to plunder. Some very nice buttons, bullets and the like for your perusal.

www.noeticart.com

You'll find some of the finest and loveliest clip art you're ever likely to see at this site, and it's all there to 'enhance your karma'. This roughly translates into pictures of frisbees and things, by the way.

www.deneba.com

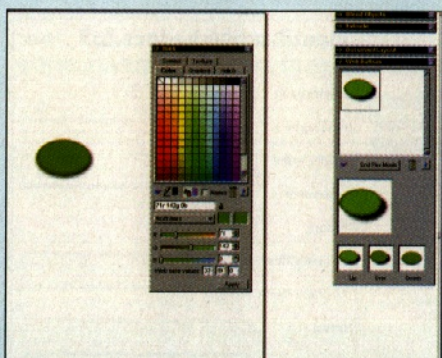
All the latest info and details on your favourite Canvas package, including some handy tips and tutorials on getting the most out of the program.



5

Defining the Over state

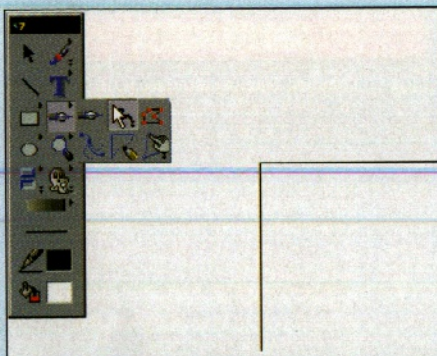
Right-click on your button and select 'Ungroup'. Select the actual button, and change the colour of the fill to a darker shade of green. Group the button and its shadow together again, and drag into the Over box. This is how the button will look when the mouse is dragged over it.



6

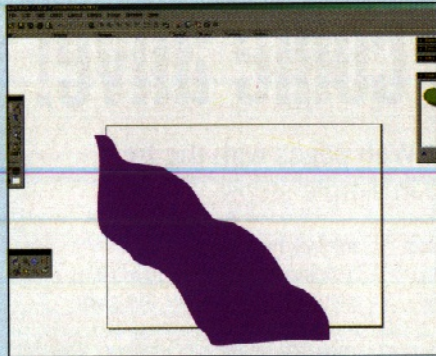
The Down state

For the last time, Ungroup your button. Now drag the actual button until it sits over the shadow. Group them and drag into the Down state. This will give a nice 3D effect. Drag the larger button in the Web Buttons palette to the empty top box.



7 Create the home page

Go to 'Layout', 'Document Setup' and change the format to pixels and custom. Set the document size at 700x500. Now go to the toolbar and select the 'Autocurve' tool as shown. This will let us draw a curved shape over the page.

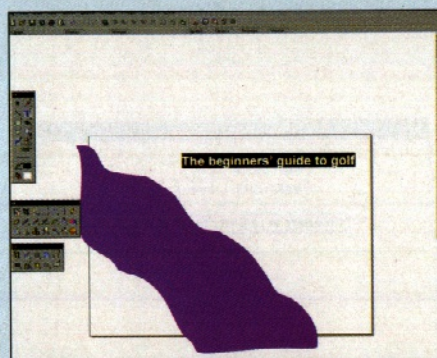
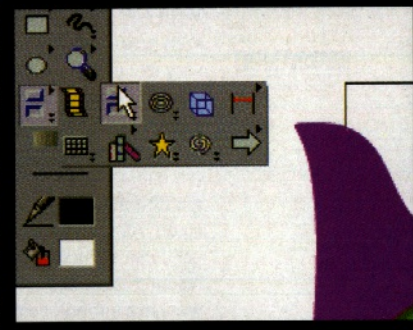


8 Draw the shape

Now it's time to draw a weird and wonderful curvy shape like ours. Don't worry if it goes off the page, as this part won't be seen by the visitor. Using the Inks box, change the line and fill colours to a nice purple.

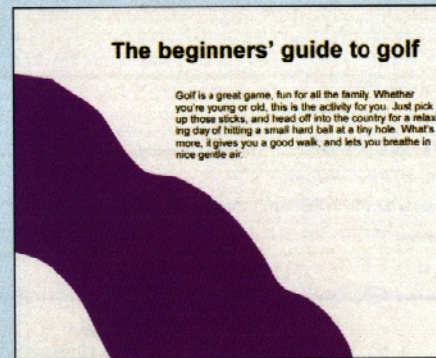
TOP TIP

! If you struggle with the sometimes fiddly toolbars in Canvas, just press and hold on the toolbar item you wish to see, then drag it across. This will drag the extended options box across, allowing you to browse for just the choice you're looking for.



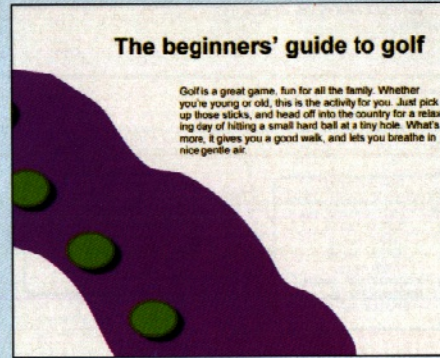
9 Add some title text

Every good page needs a decent title, so select the 'Type' tool (the capital T) from the toolbar and click towards the top-right and create a handy title. Make it as large as it should be, and bold it up too, if you're feeling brave.



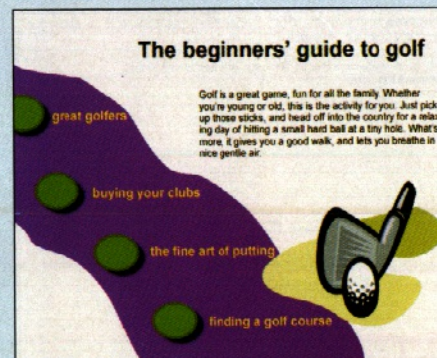
10 Some body text

Now, draw a text box under the title, and create your body text. Obviously this should be a lot smaller than the title, and make sure it doesn't run off the edge of the page at all. We're now ready to start using our buttons.



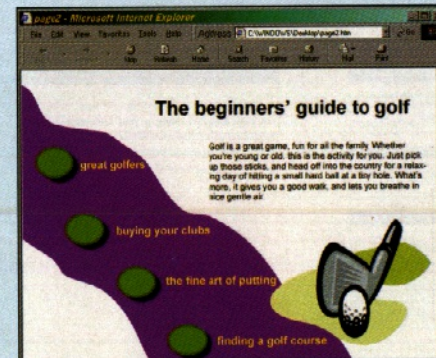
11 Button action

Drag your button from the top section of the Web Buttons box onto your purple shape. If, like ours, your button is too large, resize it, making sure you hold down SHIFT to constrain the proportions. Copy and paste this smaller button until you have four buttons.



12 Text and graphics

Now create your link text next to each button. We've gone for a yellow colour to contrast with the purple. For the final touch, just add a picture of jazz up the page. We've gone for a piece of clip art from the Canvas collection, but it's up to you where you grab your pic from.



13 Export your page

To convert your page into an HTML document, just select 'Save To Web' from the 'File' menu. Follow the steps through, accepting the default choices for each option. Give it a name, then double-click on your new HTML document to open it. You've now got a fantastic home page.

JARGON BUSTER

? Over state
An interactive Web button has three states – one basic state when it is sitting untouched (up), one for when the mouse is moved over the button (over), and another when the button is clicked on (down).

? Group/Ungroup
Lets you select various elements and graphics, and make them respond to the same set of behaviours. Particularly useful if you want to start moving sections of a page around without having to individually fiddle around with each one.

? Gaussian blur
A method of blurring an image incrementally, using a bell-shaped curve. Based on all sorts of complicated and detailed mathematical equations.

Make your site come alive!

How to: Add some interaction to your Web pages with the free YourCGI service. It's all explained here in simple steps

HOME IMPROVEMENT

WHILE IT'S POSSIBLE to get free Web space without any difficulty, very few providers allow the use of CGI (Common Gateway Interface) on their site. This means that it's not possible to run interactive features such as guestbooks, visitor counters and so on. Although it is possible to get these services from free resource sites like www.dreambook.com, these tend to involve lots of adverts

and lack the potential for customisation. Step in YourCGI, a completely free service that gives you access to a wide range of great CGI scripts with minimal advertising and maximum custom features. This tutorial shows how to get started with YourCGI and how to install a guestbook system on your site. If you're interested in developing further interactivity, take a look at the feature on page 64 of this issue.

It is signup and instantly you will have the ad below.

unable to fit your needs in any server and from anywhere in the web. waste space on your own site. countless features.

Our Scripts:
10 Access Counters - [More Info](#)
META Tag Generator - [More Info](#)
TellMe - [More Info](#)
J-Box - [More Info](#)
Clock - [More Info](#)
Date - [More Info](#)
Random Image - [More Info](#)
Random Link - [More Info](#)
Short Url - [More Info](#)

Members Login:

Username :
Password :

If you are not a member you can sign up by [clicking here](#).

START HERE

1 Sign up with YourCGI

Head for www.yourcgi.com and click on the 'signup' link in the bottom-right of the page. You only need to register once to gain access to nine different CGI scripts. In future, you can log in to YourCGI via the box on this page.

****All of the form fields are required.****

First Name - James <- Enter your first name here.

Last Name - Seabright <- Enter your last name here.

Email - j@jamesseabright.com <- Enter a valid email address here.

URL - http://www.jamesseabright.com <- Enter your homepage URL here.

Your Site Name - James' Home Page <- Enter the name of your site here.

Username - jims <- select an username and enter it here.

Password - <- select a password and enter it here.

Repeat Password - <- retype the password and enter it here.

2 Registration form

Complete all of the form boxes on the registration form, making sure to get the URL of your home page correct to avoid problems later on. When you've finished, click 'Sign Up', and the details provided will be displayed on screen for you to check.

Now Login Below:

Username : jims

Password : <- Enter your password here.

3 Log in for the first time

If the details are all correct, log in by clicking the button as shown above. Click the 'Announce It' link when the main page appears. You'll be presented with various options for the guestbook content and design. Select your preferences and click 'Continue'.

```
<html><head>
<title>Announce It - Hosted by YourCGI.com</title></head>
<body bgcolor="#FFFFFF" text="#000000" link="#0000FF"
vlink="#800080" alink="#FF0000">
<p>&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;</p>
<p><font face="Verdana"><big>Welcome</big> to the <em><font
color="#8000FF">Guest Book</font></em> page. Feel free to use it to add
your comments about this site.
</font></p>
<p>!-ANNOUNCEIT-!
<p>&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;</p>
<p>!--FORM--!
</body>
</html>
```

Thank you file the visitor sees after adding an announcement. If you

4 Alter the code

Using the code altering window shown above, it's possible to completely customise the guestbook to include your colour scheme, images, links back to your site and so on. Be careful to keep the !-ANNOUNCEIT-! and !-FORM-! elements intact.

CGI Scripts

- Announce It
- Counters
- Date
- File
- META Tag Builder
- Random Link
- Random Image
- TellMe
- URL Redirection
- Visitor Counter
- Home
- Free Stuff
- Free Digital Camera
- Info Info
- Info Board
- Send
- Delete Account
- Logout

Announce It Entry

You have finished setting up your Announce It page. To view it click [here](http://www.yourcgi.com/ad/jars.html).

5 Guest book location

The guestbook will now have been set up to your specification, and the URL is provided for you to check it is correct by clicking the link. This can then be linked to from your site for users to view and add to the guestbook.

Welcome to the *Guest Book* page. Feel free to use it to add your comments about this site.

Well, somebody has to submit the first entry, so it may as well be me...

Submitted By: James

E-Mail: j@jamesseabright.com

www.jamesseabright.com

Name - James

E-Mail - j@jamesseabright.com

URL - www.jamesseabright.com

Message:

Well, somebody has to submit the first entry, so it may as well be me...

FINISH HERE

6 Sign the book

The final check to make sure everything works is to make an entry in the guestbook yourself - just fill in the form, click 'Submit', and it will be added as shown here. Don't forget there are eight further YourCGI scripts available for your use.

Using Java special effects

How to: Add Java special effect applets to your site using the cross-platform Anfy shareware package from this issue's cover CD

**HOME
IMPROVEMENT**



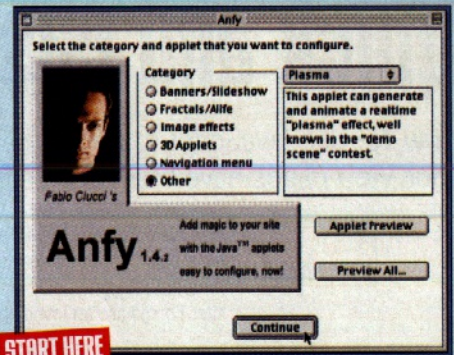
You can find
Anfy on this
month's Practical
Internet CD

JAVA APPLETs ARE a mixed blessing. On the whole, they tend to be chronically misused by Web site owners who see them as a fun addition their pages.

That's not really a good approach to take with a technology that doesn't work on all browsers and can take up a lot of processor power to have its effect. However, Java is capable of doing lots of things that other Net technologies simply can't manage,

and with the help of the Anfy package this tutorial shows you how this positive side of Java can be used to best effect on your Web site.

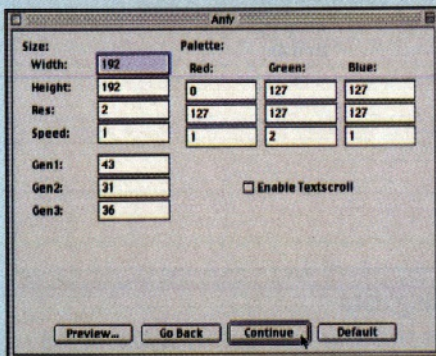
Remember to use applets sparingly and to ensure that people without Java browsers can still view your site (try this out by disabling Java in your browser preferences). In no time, you'll be able to add movement and interactivity to your pages.



START HERE

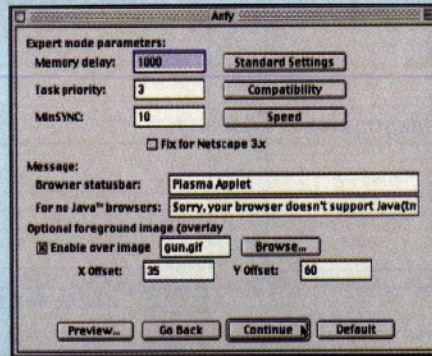
1 Selecting an applet

On launching the Anfy package, a wide range of applets are listed by type. For this tutorial we're going to use an applet that generates an animated colour pattern. This is accessed by clicking 'Other', and selecting 'Plasma' from the pop-up menu. Click 'Continue' to get started.



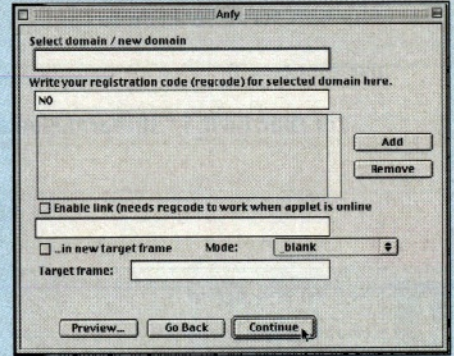
2 Configuring the applet

The Plasma settings allow us to change the size, resolution, basic colours and optionally to add scrolling text to the applet. Changes can be tested by clicking preview and waiting for the applet to load in your Web browser. Click 'Continue' when you're done.



3 Add an image

The Plasma effect can be rendered as an animated background to an image. The Anfy package comes with a gun graphic that we're using here. The 'Offset' boxes allow the graphic to be positioned as required within the applet space. Click 'Continue'.



4 Benefits of registration

As a shareware package, you should pay the registration fee for Anfy if you like it and use it regularly. Doing this unlocks the feature shown here, where you can make the applet link to a Web page when clicked. For now, just click 'Continue'.

JARGON BUSTER

?

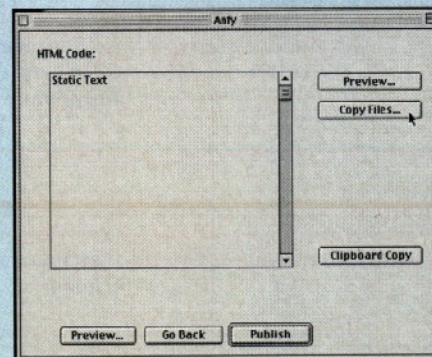
Java

This is a cross-platform programming language created by Sun Microsystems to allow complicated applications to be run by browsers on all different types of computer. It has found uses in everything from visual effects (as shown here) to chat rooms and Webcams, although its progress has often been hampered by incompatibilities and its tendency to slow down Web browsing.

?

Applet

This is term for individual Java applications. Applets are stored on a Web server alongside Web pages and images, and are downloaded in exactly the same way. They are then processed by the Java machine that's built into most popular Web browsers.



5 Copy the applet to your site

Now we're ready to transfer the applet code and associated files to your site. Click the 'Copy Files' button and you'll be presented with a standard 'Save' dialog. Locate your Web page folder and click to save the files there.



FINISH HERE

6 View the final applet

In your Web browser, open the 'preview.html' file from the location just saved to, and the applet should appear as configured. To use the applet on your own Web page, simply copy the HTML code from <applet> to </applet> into the relevant place.



Quick and easy forms

How to: Use JavaScript to check that fill-in forms on your Web pages have been correctly completed

HOME IMPROVEMENT

IT'S ALWAYS INTERESTING to find out about the kinds of people that visit your Web site. Forms are an invaluable

way of collecting information from visitors to your Web page. Not only that, but they can be used for all purposes

from simple single box forms to more complicated surveys. However, forms will rapidly lose any useful qualities they have if users fail to complete them correctly. In an attempt to combat this, many sites are using scripting to verify their contents and prevent the user from submitting the form until all the relevant data has been entered. Of course,

the possibility still remains for users to type incorrect information in to fool the script, although there's little that can be done to avoid this.

This tutorial shows you how to create a simple form verification script, which can be built upon by referring to the online resources mentioned on these pages.

```

<html>
<head>
<title>Form Checking Script</title>
<script language="JavaScript">
<!-- //

function formcheck(theform) {

var empty = 0;

    for (var i = 0; i < theform.elements.length; i++)

```

```

    {
        if (theform.elements[i].value == "") {
            alert("The form was not
completed. Please check all fields have been
completed and click Submit again.")
            empty++
            break
        }
    }
}

```

START HERE

1 Set up the script

We start off with the usual HTML page structure. Our function is called formcheck, and is hidden from older browsers using the normal `<!-- //` and `-->` notation. First of all we define a variable called empty and set its value at zero; this will be used as an indicator of whether any areas of the form have been left empty. In order to work this out, we check through each element of the form (ie each text box) using a loop set up in the line beginning 'for'.

2 Check for missing data

The code shown here is the entire content of the 'for' loop created in step one. The variable i is used to point to a particular form element, and as i increases by one each time the loop runs, it refers to a different element each time. The 'if' statement checks whether the particular form element is empty. If it is, an alert is displayed, the variable empty is added to, and the 'if' loop is stopped, as we know the form is not complete.

JARGON BUSTER



'If' statement

This allows a conditional situation to be tested for, and a section of script to be run if the condition is found to be true. This can be extended using 'else' statements that run sections of code if the situation is found to be false.



'For' statement

This is used to create a loop when the script needs to repeat the same task again with a slight variation. The number of times the loop runs depends on the conditions set in the 'for' statement. With our example, the loop runs for a number of times equal to the quantity of elements in the form minus one.

ONLINE RESOURCES



Dynamic Drive
www.dynamicdrive.com



WebCoder Scriptorium
www.webcoder.com/scriptorium



Scripts.co.uk
www.scripts.co.uk



WebMonkey JavaScript
<http://hotwired.lycos.com/webmonkey/programming/javascript>



JavaScript Developer Central
<http://devedge.netscape.com/tech/javascript>



JavaScript Source
<http://javascript.internet.com>

```

if (empty == 0) {

    theform.submit()
    alert("Thank you for completing the
form. Your details are being sent.")
}

// -->
</script>
</head>

```

3 Submit the completed form

We are now outside the 'for' loop, in a section of the script that will be reached either when the loop has finished (ie the form is completed) or broken (ie an empty element has been detected). If the loop finished, the variable 'empty' will still equal zero. We test for this with an 'if' statement. If the 'if' statement is true, the form is submitted and an alert shown to let the user know this has happened. The remaining lines tidy up the function, script and <head> sections.

TOP TIP!



If you're integrating this script into an existing page, you should always make sure that the `<script>` tag is placed within the `<head>` of the document. You should also make sure that the `<form>` is in the desired place within the `<body>` of the page.



You can view the HTML code for this example by visiting www.formscript.jamesseabright.com.

Name

Email

Gender

```
<body><center>
<div>Please complete all sections of this form to
join our mailing list</div>
<form action="mailto:james@paragon.co.uk">
Name <input type="text" name="name">
Email <input type="text" name="email">
Gender <select name="gender">
<option value="">Select one
<option value="Male">Male
<option value="Female">Female
</select>
<input type="button" name="clickalong"
value="Submit" onClick="formcheck(form)">
</form>
</center>
</body>
</html>
```

4

Set up the form

With the script in place, all we need to do is create a form and link it to the script. The code above shows a simple form, with two text boxes and a pull-down menu. This script will not detect buttons or boxes, although it can be developed to include such features. The form action will email the contents to the address provided, although this does depend on the mail configuration of the user's browser. The final `<input>` tag creates a button to trigger the script.

FINISH HERE

5

Test the script

Save the file and load it into a Web browser. If you try and submit it without completing both text boxes and selecting an option from the pull-down menu, an alert will appear. If the form is complete, as shown in the screenshot here, then a message will appear to confirm it is being sent. If you change the form submission method to use a CGI script (which is more reliable than the mailto method) then you may wish to dump this alert from the script.

JAVASCRIPT FORMS IN ACTION

FOR A BETTER IDEA OF HOW YOU CAN USE JAVASCRIPT FORMS, HAVE A LOOK AT HOW THEY'RE USED ON THESE WEB SITES



Eagle Star Direct

www.eaglestar.co.uk

With so many different types of information required to put together an accurate insurance quote, Eagle Star has made extensive use of JavaScript to make sure visitors correctly complete forms online. Instead of the slightly annoying appearance of an alert box, it has opted for the more subtle approach of error messages appearing in its own frame at the bottom of the page.



MultiMap

www.multimap.com

Often it's not just a problem of users failing to enter data at all – sometimes we need to check that it's been entered in the correct way. MultiMap's new Driving Directions site requires times and dates to be entered correctly, and as shown in the screenshot here, the script also detects whether the details are the correct range.

Javascript Form Validation Tool ver 2.5

by Art Lubin / Artwork / Email: perflunk@aol.com

This form validation tool can check for **required, integer, email and date fields** in your forms. It is easily portable to all your forms and will help save server side resources from form field validation and page reloads. All the messages are customized in the hidden form element where you also select the validation requirement. You can mix the required element with any of the other elements. This code is completely portable and can be used with any form by just adding your hidden elements appropriately and adding the `onClick` command to a button.

Following the rules.

1) To set a required field use your existing field name and add an `r_` to the beginning of the field name and create a hidden element.

EXAMPLE:

```
<input type="text" name="your_fieldname">
<input type="hidden" name="r_ your_fieldname" value="Required error message goes here">
```



JavaScript Form Validation Tool

<http://members.aol.com/perflunk/validation.html>

If you would prefer to use a ready-made script for your form validation, this is one of the best you'll find. As well as the basic testing method used in the script developed in this tutorial, this tool can also check for email addresses, numbers, dates and correctly completed radio buttons or check boxes. Well worth investigating.

HOW WE BUILT

FILM unlimited



Deputy Editor Imogen Tilden



Editor Xan Brooks



The old style site, before the redesign

Having worked for years in the print world, moving to the ever-changing world of Web site creation gave Xan Brooks some food for thought, as **Thomas Watson** discovered

When the Film Unlimited Web site was revamped in July of this year, it was the first time it had been touched since it was first launched in 1999.

A new Online Editor means new ideas, though, and that took shape in the arrival of Xan Brooks to the team in January of this year. As a print man through and through, Xan admits that it took him time to grapple with the complexities of working on the ephemeral Web. "For the first few months, I worked with the ideas that were in operation already," he says. As quickly as he could, though, he started voicing his ideas for subtle tweaks and changes to the site.

Originally talked about in March, the redesigns were eventually made in July. The most immediate and apparent alteration is to the navigation bar, which has grown from a single line ten button bar to an impressive 15 button doubler. Obviously, the main reason for this is to allow more sections to be created, and accessed from anywhere on the

site, but Xan admits that "some of the better items on the site were buried before we got round to changing the navigation".

Communities 'r' us

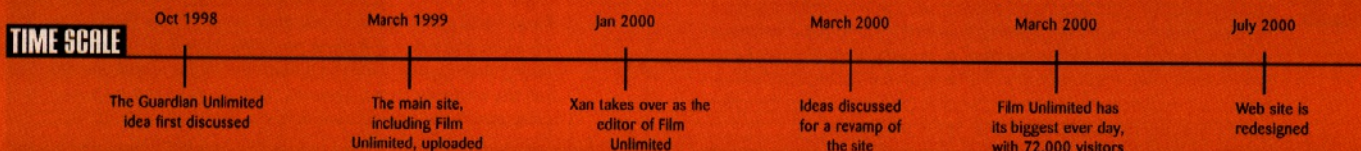
Lurking behind all of the redesign plans was the desire to capture that elusive community feel often desired by the Web set. As always, though, it's the subtle differences that work best. Take, for example, the quiz. Previously a 'blink and you'll miss it' never to be repeated one-off, the quiz is still updated every week, but previous versions

are now stored in an archive.

Being an up-to-the-minute Web site means that the latest quiz is always tied in to the latest film releases, although this format can lead to problems with topicality. When recent George Clooney-athon *Perfect Storm* was released, Xan and Deputy Editor, Imogen Tilden, spent valuable hours knocking up a cool disaster movie quiz, only for the Concorde tragedy to render this somewhat distasteful, and highly unsuitable for a nation coming to terms with just such an event.

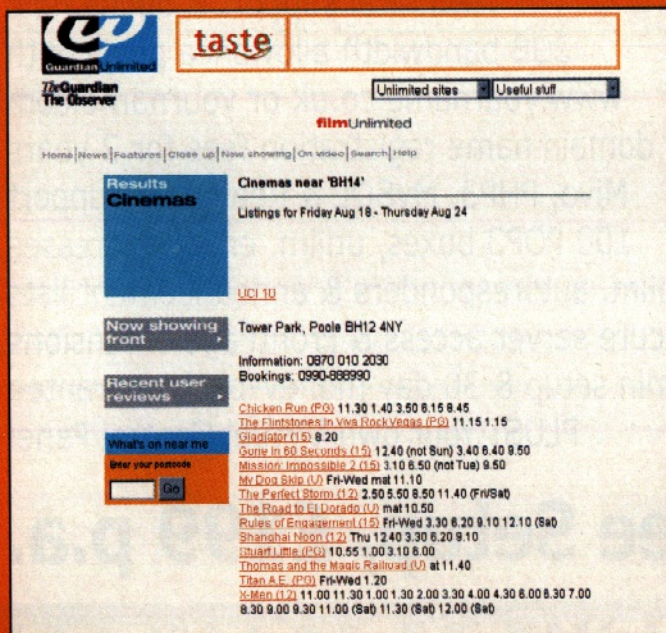


One of the main changes to the home page in the redesign was more items in the navigation bar





All of the pages are designed and updated using the in-house created content manager. This lets Xan and Imogen change the site every day without having to bother with designers and the like



No Guardian rehash

With a site of this nature, it would be easy to go for the lazy option, and turn it into something that just reflects what's gone in the *Guardian*. Being the conscientious types that they are, Xan and Imogen wouldn't dream of entertaining such a thought. "We're keen for the Web site not to be just an archive of *Guardian* articles. We want to capitalise on the Web," says Xan. The inclusion of a hefty news section on the site tends to mean something of a large workload to keep on top of it. The news is updated twice a day, at 11am and 5pm. The morning update sees the major changes made, and not because this is when the team first get their hands on the news section in the *Guardian*. Firstly, the visitor boom time of the day for Film Unlimited is lunchtime, so an update just

before this means that the greedy Net ravagers will be kept fully up-to-date on the latest film news. Secondly, because most of the hot gossip and info stems from across the pond, news breaks during the middle of the night to we Brits. This usually means that Xan and Imogen arrive bleary-eyed in work every morning to find a mountain of newsy nuggets to mull over.

Twice is nice

Since he took over in January, Xan has seen the site double its monthly page impression rate to over 800,000, although the biggest day in Film Unlimited's short history came just as the redesign was being first mentioned. Monday 27th March 2000 saw the 48th annual Oscars ceremony, and also saw Film Unlimited receive 72,000 visitors. Obviously the effect of the most

significant day in the film year can't be ignored, but the team made a decent effort, providing minute-by-minute online commentary, as well as constantly updated picture clips. You might not be surprised to know that the moving image works a treat on the Film Unlimited site. When the Trailer Park section was created in April, it "was mainly just a method for us to get more moving images on the site". To everyone's slight surprise, the new area, just a collection of the latest trailers for visitors to download, quickly became one of the most popular sections on the site.

So, now that the site is looking as snazzy as you like, and the Editor has come to terms with the enormity of the job in hand (13,144 pages!), what of the future? Well, the quest for more interaction is paramount. "We want

Trailer park

Home News Reviews Now showing Features Interviews Sites we like Help
Games Talk On video Mood matcher Search Brits in film Trailer park

Welcome to the Trailer Park, Film Unlimited's one-stop directory of film trailers

These pages takes you to trailers on [My Movies](#), and on the films' official sites. Some of the trailers need to be viewed using RealPlayer which can be downloaded free [here](#). Films are listed alphabetically. Use Ctrl F or Apple F to search.

- Trailers G - P
- Trailers Q - Z

Trailers 1 - F



102 Dalmations
UK release: December 2000

Cruella De Ville (Glenn Close) is released from prison on good behaviour only to find that there's a whole world of doggies just itching to be skinned.

[Watch the trailer](#)

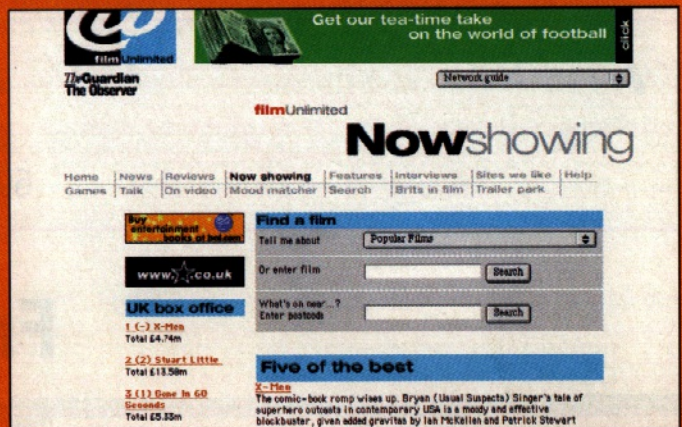


The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle
UK release: TBC

Part live-action part CGI-animated comedy adventure based on the cartoon series. Robert De Niro and Rene Russo play the three-dimensional baddies.

[Watch the trailer](#)

The team were pleasantly surprised when the Trailer Park quickly became one of the most popular parts of the site



to make everything more interactive on the site, make more of the games section. We're only just finding our feet. There are so many possibilities." ■

SITE STATS

The site	
Film Unlimited	www.filmunlimited.com
Who designed it?	In-house
How many people were involved?	15
Time taken?	Two weeks for update
Software?	All done using the in-house content design manager
Number of pages?	13,144
Page impressions?	820,000 a month
Most in a day?	72,000 (27th March 2000)

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Q&A

DON'T GET FRUSTRATED – GET HELP FROM OUR TECH EXPERT
CLIVE PARKER INSTEAD. EMAIL HIM AT HELPDESK@PARAGON.CO.UK

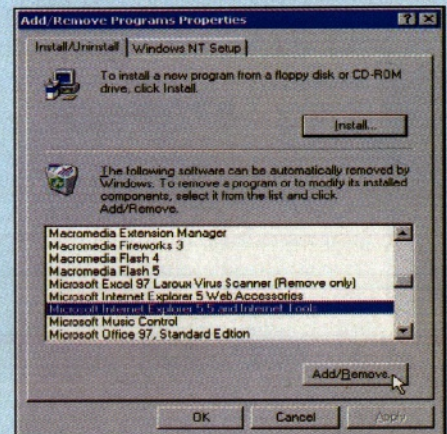
MR FREEZE

Every time I try to type a Web site address into the Internet Explorer 5 address bar, I get as far as the first two Ws in www. and Internet Explorer 5 freezes up on me. I then press Ctrl Alt Delete to end the task, and although I still remain connected to the Internet my PC's screen goes back to the Windows desktop. In order to get the sites I want, I have to go into search engines in my Favorites. Is there an answer to this problem?

Ernest Jones

When you select the End Task button after pressing Ctrl Alt Delete, it forces Internet Explorer 5 to close, that's why you return to the Windows desktop. It sounds as though your version of Internet Explorer 5 may have

become corrupted in some way. Go to the 'Start' menu and select 'Settings', 'Control Panel'. When the Control Panel window opens, double-click on the 'Add/Remove Programs' icon to open the Add/Remove Programs Properties control panel. Scroll down the list until you find the entry for Internet Explorer 5, it should be listed as Microsoft Internet Explorer 5. Now click on the 'Add/Remove' button. When the Internet Explorer and Internet Tools dialog box opens, select the 'Repair Internet Explorer' radio button and click the 'OK' button. Make sure you have your Internet Explorer 5 CD available – if you've lost it, there's one on this month's free cover disc – and follow the instructions on-screen to fix your copy of Internet Explorer 5.



Use the Add/Remove Programs control panel to find Internet Explorer 5...

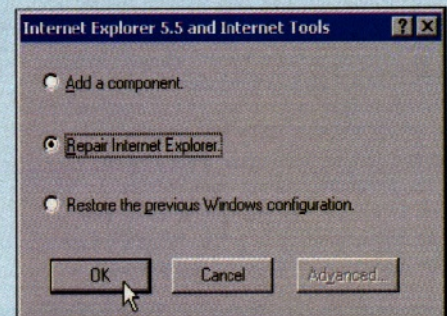
GRADUAL FADE-OUT

I've got a problem in Internet Explorer 5 with the backgrounds. As you can see in the pictures included (sorry they are out of focus, but you get the idea), the colour of the backgrounds isn't there in the whole page. Sometimes it works properly, but most of the time it doesn't. I've reinstalled Internet Explorer 5 and also repaired it, but it still goes wrong. Also, I have problems with my system colours. Sometimes when I turn my PC on and it boots into Win 98 SE, the colour scheme changes to a high colour version I tried out once. Again, sometimes it works properly, sometimes it doesn't. I'm wondering if these two problems are connected and I would appreciate it if you could help me out because it's really annoying me.

Lee Glover

I've taken a look at the page featured in your blurry photographs and the background colours are supposed to fade out. There's nothing wrong with your copy of Internet Explorer 5, it's the design of the Web page that's causing your problem.

As to your problem with your PC colour scheme, the only thing I can suggest is that you delete the high colour scheme from the Appearance section of the Display control panel. Go to the 'Start' button and select 'Settings', 'Control Panel'. Open the Display control panel and click on the 'Appearance' tab. Scroll down the list of schemes until you find the one you created. Select it, and then click on the 'Delete' button. This should stop it from reappearing when you boot up again.



...then select the 'Repair Internet Explorer' option to fix your problems

HEADING DOWN THE HIGHWAY

Hi Clive, *Practical Internet* is a great magazine for Net users like me. Would a second BT line called Home Highway help speed up my very slow access of Web pages? When I contacted BT they said I would have a connection speed of 128k. My computer is a Time model with a 56k internal modem.

Kevin Sqaunce

BT's Home Highway ISDN service can indeed speed up your connection to the Internet, but there are a few points to be aware of.

When you get BT's Home Highway ISDN service installed, it's not exactly a second line added to your existing line. Your current line is converted to an ISDN digital line by adding hardware at your local exchange and in your house. This hardware then effectively gives you a digital ISDN connection plus two analogue phone lines, so you actually end up with three phone numbers. You can usually retain your existing number.



1

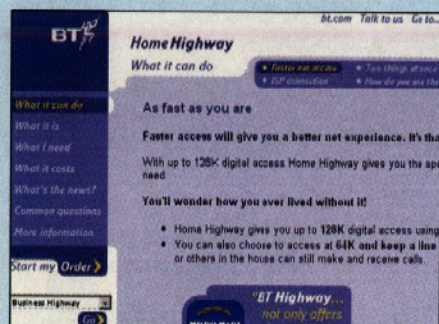
Don't worry, the background colour is supposed to fade away



2

If there are colour schemes that you really can't stand, delete them in the Display control panel

You can use the two analogue lines as normal telephone, fax or modem lines and you connect to the Internet using the digital ISDN line that has a connection speed of 64k. For a 128k connection, your dial-up software will effectively use two ISDN lines at the same time to give you two 64k connections, this is called bundling. This means you are paying for two calls to the Internet, so on a weekend 128k calls will cost you 2p per minute rather than 1p.



BT's Home Highway may be more expensive than other lines, but it can actually save you money

Your modem can't be used for ISDN connections – a replacement device called an ISDN terminal adapter is used instead. BT can supply this when you make your order, although I do suggest buying the BT Speedway ISDN PCI Card. I picked mine up for just over £40 + VAT by mail order from a PC magazine. There are many other ISDN TAs available.

You should also bear in mind the cost. BT have several offers ranging from £50 to convert with a £40 per month line rental less £13 call allowance to a larger £117 conversion fee with £35 per month line rental and £10

worth of free calls. The line rental charges compare favourably with having two standard phone lines when you take your call allowances into account.

I've been using Home Highway for over 18 months now; my phone costs have plummeted from £140 per month direct debit (£40 for the phone line and £100 for the modem line) to a more manageable £70 per month. On my last statement I was £20 in credit with BT. For the first time ever.

ILL ADVISED

I have enjoyed reading your magazine and I imagine that your advice pages will prove very useful in the future. Unfortunately I have a very fundamental problem that is quickly becoming irritating. At some time in the recent past, I have managed to corrupt the Internet settings on my system related to the Content Advisor, which is now enabled. When I launch Internet Explorer 5 I get the error message 'Please check your Content Advisor settings for missing information. Click the Tools menu and then click Internet Options. On the Content tab, check the Content Advisor settings' and my ISP front page cannot be downloaded. I am then unable to browse any Web pages. I carry out the instructions and can change any of the settings but when I close the dialog box, the settings revert to those that cause the message. At the moment I am having to launch IE5, change any setting, disable content advisor, close the dialog and immediately refresh to my home page. I am using Windows 98 and would be grateful for any advice as to how and where I might be able to manually alter the initial settings

for Content Advisor (I assume that there are one or more startup/registry type files somewhere but have been unable to find it/them). I would hate to have to start my system from scratch again. Can you help me please?

Steve Jenkins

It does sound as though the Content Advisor module of Internet Explorer 5 has been damaged in some way and is unable to retain any settings. Try to repair Internet Explorer 5 using the procedure outlined in the Mr Freeze question (see page 87). If that doesn't work, then you should uninstall Internet Explorer 5 and reinstall it from scratch. You shouldn't have to reinstall Windows from scratch.



A DOCTOR WRITES

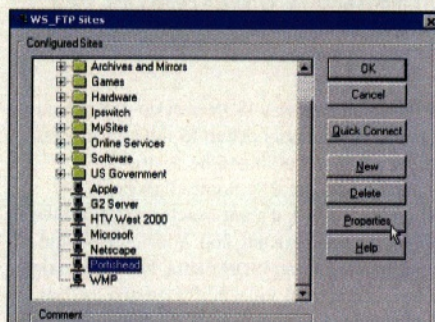
I have created a Web site at www.drmmurray.supanet.com and uploaded it. However, although the pictures transferred fine in binary, the HTML files were badly damaged using ASCII transfer. I used WS_FTP Pro and CuteFTP as my agents and both gave the same results. This raised some suspicions. I then tried to upload the site from a friends' computer. This went fine, so I presume this means that most of

the site is okay. However, last night I tried to upload some new content and the same old problem occurred – a good example being at www.drmmurray.supanet.com/sancreedcross1.html

Do you know what I am doing wrong?
Dr Murray

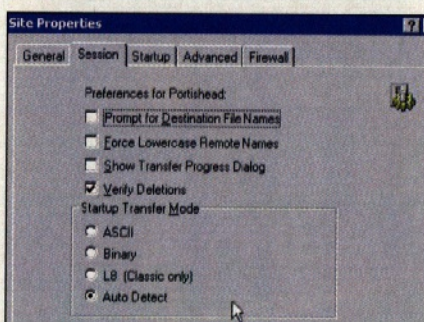
I've taken a look at your Web page and it seems to come to a stop halfway through the

code. I also noticed that some of your file names – such as 'celtic history.html' – have spaces in them, this is illegal in HTML and those files will not load because of the space. With your main problem, the only other thing I can think of is to make sure you have got WS_FTP set up correctly to manage ASCII files. Follow the steps below to configure ASCII uploads.



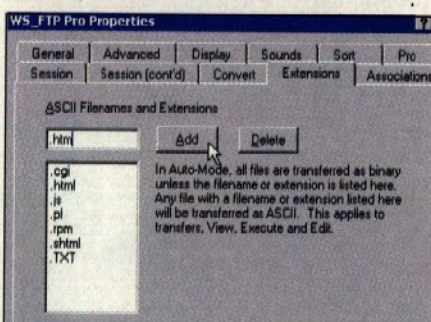
1

Open WS_FTP Pro and select the link to your site in the Sites window. Now click on the 'Properties' button on the right.



2

In the Site Properties box, click on the 'Session' tab. In the Startup Transfer Mode section, make sure that the 'Auto Detect' radio button is selected, then click 'OK'.



3

Open the main Options window of WS_FTP Pro and click 'Extensions'. Make sure .html and .htm have entries in the ASCII Filenames and Extensions window. If not, create them by clicking on 'Add'.

AUTO CONNECT

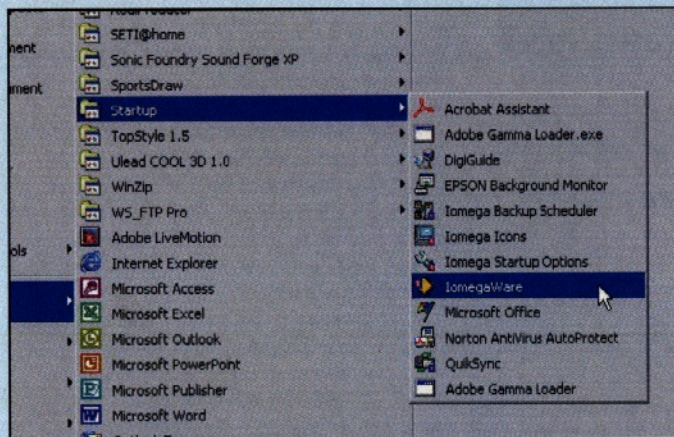
I have been a LineOne user for a couple of months or so now, but ever since using its CD-ROM to get online with its LineOne/Quip! offer, my computer has developed one niggling problem which LineOne Support cannot figure out. When starting up my computer, I am faced with a window which opens with the message 'Cannot find server http://www.lineone.net'

I know this is not a major problem but it has become irritating to say the least. LineOne Support has had me making adjustments to my Internet set up and check my Start Up folder, but there is no LineOne item anywhere in it. I can only imagine it has something to do with the software I installed because it is trying to launch the Internet as soon as I start the PC. It is worth mentioning that I did change my home page to Excite to see if the message header changed, but it's still trying to find the LineOne server. Can you please help? Four of the LineOne support team have

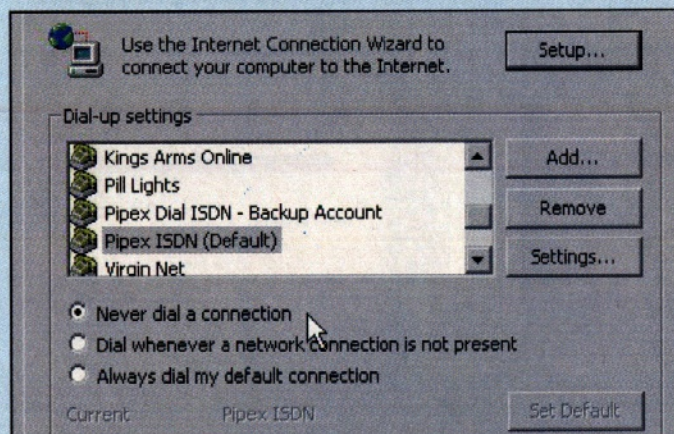
come up with ideas, but so far they have been unable to solve the problem. I do get the impression that they really don't know what the problem is and are just asking me to change things for the sake of doing something. Please help before I reach for the hammer.

Roy Watson

The problem is occurring because a program on your PC is trying to access the Internet as soon as you boot up the PC. It could be any of the programs listed in your Startup folder, it doesn't necessarily have to be a LineOne application such as Internet Explorer 5 or Outlook Express causing the problem. The best thing you can do is to stop Windows from automatically trying to connect to the Internet. Go to the 'Start' menu and select 'Settings', 'Control Panel' and open the Internet Options. Now click on the 'Connections' tab and click on the 'Never dial a connection' radio button. Click on the 'OK' button and then close down Internet Options. Reboot your PC and it should no longer try to connect to the Internet.



There are probably more items than you think lurking in your PC's Startup folder



In the Internet Option control panel, click the 'Connections' tab and disable automatic dialling to the Internet

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JACK OF ALL TRADES

Because I am connected to the phone line 24 hours a day, I would like to know if there is any software that will allow fax messages and answer phone messages to be collected on my computer? The problem I have is that I already have the maximum number of connections on one line and it seems the obvious solution to get all communications coming in via the same machine. Look forward to your help on this.

Trevor Jones

Most big brand name modems such as US Robotics and Hayes should be supplied with software that does this already. It may be worthwhile checking out the Start menu on your PC. Go to 'Programs', 'Accessories', 'Communications' to see what's lurking in the folder. If you can't find any software on your PC or in your modem box, your best bet to visit www.download.com and type 'voicemail' into the search field. When I tried this it came up with about 15 different programs that perform voicemail and fax management on your PC. Most are shareware but some are

free. Two I like the look of are MessageASP (messageasp.com), which is completely free, and CallAttendant (www.objectworld.com) that has a shareware fee of \$150.

SECOND COMING

I'm getting a second PC and I want to link it to my original PC to swap files and so on. How do I connect them together, and do I have to use a separate modem for each PC?

Jonathan Davies

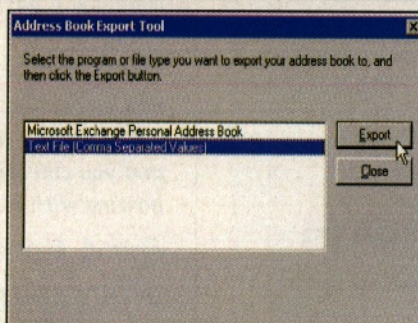
You can link to PCs together using standard EtherNet cards, you should be able to link them directly together without any need for a network hub of any kind. You can pick up reasonably good cards for around £20 each if you shop around. You can access the Internet from both PCs using the modem in your original machine. It's a bit tricky to configure if you know nothing about networking, especially in Windows 95 or 98. However, if you upgrade to Windows ME it has easy to configure networking built in, so it should be worth the wait until 14 September when it goes on sale.

ADDRESS UNKNOWN

My PC has thrown a bit of a wobbler and crashed. After getting it back up and running I discovered the address book in Outlook Express had disappeared. I rebuilt it by opening emails and adding the addresses back into the address book, but it was a long and boring process. Is there any way I can back up my Outlook Express address book? I've had a look around the options and preferences but I can't find any option to do this.

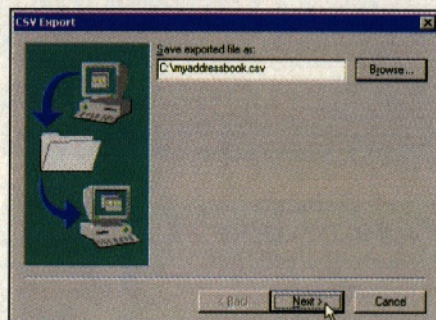
Bruce Smyth

You're probably not looking in the right place. If you look in the File menu of Outlook express you will see a command called Export. If you select it, a sub-menu appears with two options, Address Book and Messages. Click on the 'Address Book' command and follow these steps.



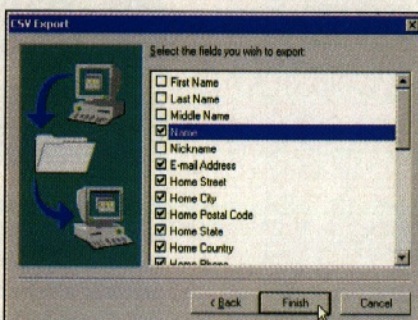
1

When the Address Book Export Tool window opens, select the format you want to use to save your details. I usually save as a text file with a .CSV extension. Click on the 'Export' button.



2

Use the browse button to create a name and find a location to save the file.



3

Finally, choose the fields you want to export in the text file. Any fields used in your address book will be automatically selected. Click 'Finish' to export the file.

Site building Q&A

OUR RESIDENT HTML GURU **JAMES SEABRIGHT**
ANSWERS YOUR WEB SITE BUILDING QUERIES

VIRTUAL GALLERY

I am just about to launch a business on the Internet which is an online art gallery. The person who has done the design for me has done a reasonable job, but we can't find out how to create a comment/reply section, and also need to add eCommerce facilities. You can view the gallery at

<http://freespace.virgin.net/rich.deering>

David Hoyle

I certainly agree that you need to add eCommerce facilities to the site, so people can place orders online. It's increasingly the case that Web shoppers will not make the effort to place an offline order. Thankfully it's very easy to add online ordering facilities, either by using a Web-based solution like www.apoogee.com, or a software package such as Actinic Catalog or ecBuilder (both featured in this issue's Web Building News on page 18).

Whatever route you take, you may find that it involves an extensive reworking of the site, as all of the solutions suggested here are capable of creating product information pages that link directly to an online purchasing page. If you're keen to keep the existing design, it's possible to find solutions such as the BeSeen Buy It button (www.beseen.com) that allow you to just add a 'Buy Now' link to existing pages.

As for the comment form, it's easy to add one by using the free service at www.responseomatic.com. It's best to steer clear from guestbooks as they are often abused and also look out of place on a shopping site.

It's confusing that your front page refers to a .com domain that doesn't exist. If you are looking to register this domain then it's possible to do so very cheaply through one of the many registrars who advertise in *Practical Internet*. Indeed, it's almost essential to have a domain name of your own to be taken seriously as an online merchant. Almost all domain registrars will have a facility for pointing the domain to your existing free Web space, thus avoiding the extra cost of hosting.

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Not anymore. Thanks to modern technology, all you

If you want to see what people think of your site, or the service you offer, you can get a comments form from Response-O-Matic, at www.responseomatic.com

FREE DOMAIN DOUBTS

I have visited the free domain site www.NameZero.com but don't fully understand everything that is being said. Is there a catch? I am a fanatical Pompey fan and have my own site, http://surf.to/m0les_hole, an address I got for free at a place called www.v3.com although it only re-directs.

The Great Baldini

I've received quite a few messages like this one from readers doubting that the free domain service mentioned in my HTML Hack column of issue 44 comes without any strings attached. As explained in that issue, the only drawback of the service is that your site will be placed in a frame alongside the 'NameZero Passport' bar, which contains links to the other services and an advertisement. Personally I don't see this as a major drawback, especially as there is the facility to customise the Passport bar, for instance by adding favourite URLs to the pull-down menu for quick access. Steve Cooper also contacted me to ask how my site (www.jamesseabright.com) dispenses with the NameZero frame when links from the main page are clicked. This is done by simply adding the HTML tag `<base target="_top">` to the `<head>` section of the main Web page. You should also be aware that you don't own the

domain registered by NameZero, although the transfer charge levied if you want to become the owner is reasonable.

DOMAIN DILEMMA

I am writing with a frustrating dilemma raised by the increase in companies offering reselling accounts to host domain names. We are keen to utilise our position as a trusted local business to meet a demand from people wanting a domain name, Web site and dial-up account with us. We have established a community Web site at www.bossc.co.uk that attracts local interest. Our dilemma is finding a reseller company that can give us sub-domains of our community domain and new domains with Web space and a dial up account that does not re-direct (that is the browser types www.mysite.com and is taken to www.another.com/mysite), preventing search engines from registering the sites.

Gordon Langridge

There are plenty of domain registrars and hosting companies who would be able to help you – a search at www.hostindex.com came up with 162 European companies alone, and there's no reason to restrict your research to this continent. The only service you require that

is location-specific is a dial-up account, although that could be done by advising clients of the best ISP to connect with, depending on their level of Net usage. Low users would do best with a free local rate ISP like Freeserve, more serious Net users would be happier with unmetered ISPs such as World Online.

I understand your concern regarding search engine submissions. Many search engines are intelligent enough to cope with the kind of URL forwarding done by most hosting companies, although to be 100% sure of getting listed correctly, you do need to avoid forwarding altogether. As the database at www.hostindex.com focuses on Web space providers rather than domain registrars, I'm sure you'll find what you need at that site.

The screenshot shows the HostIndex website interface. At the top, there are navigation links for 'e-commerce', 'free shopping cart', 'credit card processing', and 'Hostway.com'. A search bar is visible with the text 'Search for hosts'. Below this, a table lists various hosting services with details like 'EuroWorld Internet Publishing Co.', 'Compleatwebsitesolutions', and 'Guia-Spain'. Each entry includes information about virtual hosting, minimum costs, and contact details. On the right side, there are additional links for 'interland', 'Sponsor Offers', and 'FREE Hosting News'.

HostIndex (www.hostindex.com) is an excellent resource for finding domain registrars and hosting companies

The House For Little Horrors

Last updated by Amanda: 19 July 2000

Best viewed with Internet Explorer 4.0



SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

Whilst the front page of the site is very visually appealing, the graphic design is too tall to fit in the average Web browser window without scrolling around. A marginal reduction in the size of the design would both make the front page better looking and would speed up load times on this graphically intensive site.

POSITION PROBLEMS

The children on the front page don't align when viewed on some browsers. The best way around this is to incorporate the children into the main graphic, and then link to other pages by turning that graphic into an imagemap. Other position problems arise from browsers displaying text at different sizes and this making layers appear on top of text.

NAVIGATION NIGGLES

At first sight, it appears that there is no way of navigating between sections of the site from the internal pages. A closer look reveals that the sidebar on the left of the page contains icons that serve this purpose. It would make more sense to redesign these in a more visible way, complete with a description of where each icon leads.

DESIGN DOCTOR



IF YOU WOULD LIKE THE DESIGN DOCTOR TO DIAGNOSE PROBLEMS WITH YOUR SITE'S DESIGN, EMAIL JAMES@PARAGON.CO.UK WITH THE URL. YOUR PRESCRIPTION MAY WELL APPEAR ON THESE PAGES IN A FUTURE ISSUE

THE HOUSE FOR LITTLE HORRORS

www.thehouseforlittleshorror.co.uk

AMANDA HAYLER HAS created this site as a resource for pre-school children, and its bright colours and graphics should keep the target age range entertained. The Web Studio package has been used to create the site reviewed here, which is an easy-to-use but fairly limited piece of software. Amanda's recent upgrade to Dreamweaver will be invaluable in putting the design ideas presented here into action.

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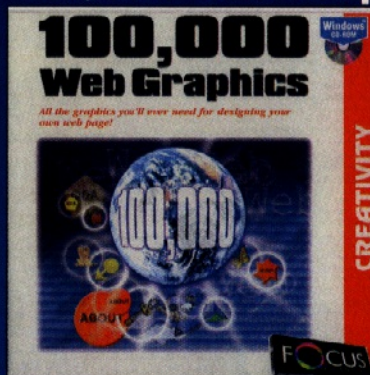
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100,000 Web Graphics



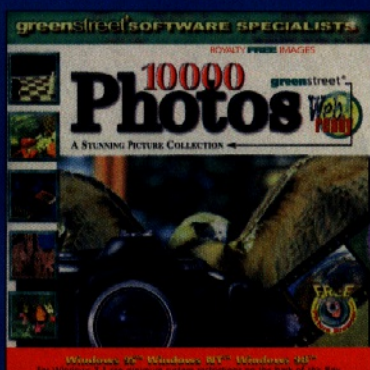
Bring your Web pages to life with this fabulous collection of 100,000 Web graphics. This CD comes complete with buttons, bullets, arrows, lines and icons plus hundreds of royalty-free clipart images for personal use. There are also 500 animated clipart images. Whether you're a beginner to or an advanced surfer, you'll never find customising your site simpler. Easy to follow steps guide you through using the graphics.

Xoom Web Page Power Pack



You'll find virtually everything you need here to create high impact Web pages quickly and easily. It's a suite of powerful tools that let you create and maintain your Web pages like the professionals! It includes Web Snake, a set of Internet tools you can use to download a Web site for offline browsing, plus GIF Animator, an image compression tool, and Web Site Starter Kit, a collection of more than 50 complete Web sites for you to use.

10,000 Photos



If you intend to use photos on your Web site, this stunning collection is a must. Offering a wide range of top quality, full colour images, it covers subjects as diverse as the animal world, technology, eCommerce, food and terrain. All the images are royalty-free so you can rest assured that you won't get into legal hot water over copyright. Whatever image you need is here. They're all easily accessed and can be quickly resized.

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YOUR DETAILS

1. Age:

- ☐ 10-16 ☐ 17-20 ☐ 21-30
☐ 31-45 ☐ 46-60 ☐ 60+

2. Occupation:

3. What do you like most about the magazine?

4. How many people read your copy of the
magazine?

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ More

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hardware on test

BEFORE YOU BUY ANY EXTRAS FOR YOUR PC, READ OUR HARDWARE REVIEW SECTION TO SORT THE TURKEYS FROM THE MUST-HAVES



Hardware

BUDGET PCs 94

Whether it's for your first PC or just an upgrade, read our reviews of four great machines

QUICKCAM WEB 98

The QuickCam Web form Logitech not only takes great clips – it's a work of art as well

INTERNET ALERT 510 98

Scared of missing that all-important call when you're on the Net? This gizmo will sort you out

GSMART 350 100

If you're on a budget, try this budget digital camera for size

Software

BROWSERS 103

The browser world is more than just a two-horse race. Read our tests of some alternatives

SERIF WEBPLUS 6 106

Worried by the weird world of Web creation? Serif WebPlus 6 is the answer to your problems

STUDENT SURVIVAL KIT 107

McAfee's latest protection packages will appeal to everyone – not just stressed-out students

TRAFFIC BUILDER 107

Get your site noticed before others with the help of Traffic Builder

Books

HOME SHOPPING ON THE NET 108

Spend some cash online

JOB HUNT ON THE NET 108

Opportunity knocks

PERSONAL FINANCE ON THE NET 108

Keep your finances healthy

PROPERTY DEVELOPER SECRETS 108

For property developers and buy-to-let landlords

Netgamer

GRAND PRIX 3 111

Become a speed demon with this game

KLINGON ACADEMY 111

More *Star Trek* space adventures

THE DUKES OF HAZARD 111

Southern fun with the Duke brothers



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BUDGET PCs ON TEST

Easy PC!

Got about a grand to spend on a new PC? Martin Pipe puts four budget-priced systems through their paces

At a time when everything seems to be going up in price – insurance, housing, food and so on – it's a relief to know that the price of PCs has, in real terms, come down considerably. When the first IBM PC was introduced back in 1981, it sold for several thousands of pounds. Yet this computer is exceptionally primitive by modern standards.

Compared to a modern machine, it's barely recognisable. A thousand pounds of today's money will buy you a PC with gaming-friendly 3D graphics, a fax/modem, a sizeable hard disk, the ability to play DVDs and – quite often – the ability to compile your own CDs. Many are also pre-installed with a comprehensive selection of software, and the ability to easily connect to the Internet. Sure, there are other ways of getting online, including set-top boxes and Internet-enabled TVs, but none have the power and flexibility of the good old personal computer. Go for the PC option, and a world of non-Internet activities is open to you. Word-processing, home accounts, education, arcade-quality games, digital photography and video editing are just a few of the tasks to which today's PCs can be put.

ONLINE RESOURCES



www.tomshardware.com

Thorough guide to PC technology.



www.shareware.com

All the shareware you could want.



www.tucows.com

More shareware, but with Internet applications primarily in mind.



www.microsoft.com

Where do you want your PC to go today?



www.intel.com

Home of the Celeron and Pentium processors. Site contains useful PC buying information.



www.amd.com

This site is home of the Duron and Athlon processors.

YOUR PC'S VITAL PARTS

Modem line socket

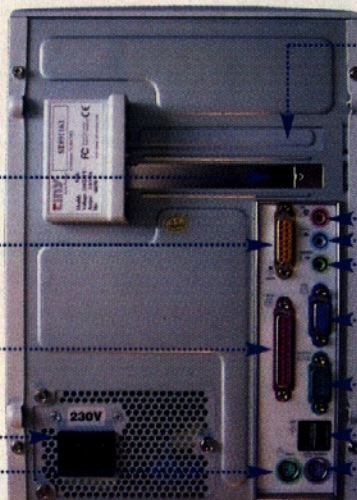
Joystick port

Parallel port

For pre-USB printers and scanners

Mains connector

Mouse port



Vacant PCI slot
Hidden behind cover

Microphone socket

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For musicians

Line output
Feed your speakers

VGA output
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Serial port
Attaches modems

USB port

Keyboard port



Contact: Tiny Computers

URL: www.tiny.com/uk/index.html

Phone: (0800) 783 4575

Price: £999

1. Tiny Entertainment Studio Plus

TINY BY NAME, tiny by nature – this PC is built into one of the smallest cases we've seen. Inside the stylish enclosure is a 600MHz Celeron, flanked by 64Mb of RAM and 15Gb of hard disk space. You get a standard 1.44Mb floppy, plus a single 4x CD-RW unit. We're pleased that the latter has been specified, although the lack of a second CD drive means that copying discs can be a rather time-consuming activity. We're a bit worried that the system is restricted in terms of upgradability. Although the graphics card is an AGP type, it's integrated onto the motherboard. Although this is adequate for everyday tasks, its performance doesn't come close to the latest 3D cards on the market. There's no dedicated AGP slot, so you can't replace it with a better card. Gamers beware!

Bountiful booty

Internal peripheral expansion is restricted to a single PCI slot – two if you remove the V.90 (soft) fax/modem. Although there are three such slots, the case design fails to cater to their full potential. On a more positive note, the Studio Plus is festooned with no fewer than four USB ports. The system is supplied with a pair of rather poor multimedia speakers, a decent mouse, a fair keyboard and average 15-inch SVGA monitor. But there's more, making the Studio the most comprehensive bundle of the group. Also included is a fair-quality 600dpi flatbed scanner, Fuji MX1200 megapixel digital camera and Lexmark colour inkjet printer. The Windows '98 software bundle, which alone is worth £1,155 according to Tiny, also deserves a mention. Basically, something for everyone.

THE VERDICT

Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★☆
Value	★★★★★
Overall	★★★★☆



Contact: Compaq

URL: www.compaq.co.uk

Phone: (0845) 270 4222

Price: £899

2. Compaq Presario 5BW120

HERE'S A STYLISH 600MHz Celeron-based Windows '98 system with some nifty design features. Most obvious is the front-panel CD holder, which lowers to reveal space for three discs. The larger size of the Compaq means that more peripherals can be accommodated – to this end we have a 8x DVD-ROM and 4x CD-RW drive in addition to the usual 1.44Mb floppy. Hidden in the case, meanwhile, is a 15Gb hard drive. We're pleased to report that memory expansion is quite straightforward – the Intel 810-based motherboard features two slots, one of which has the supplied 64Mb. However, like the Tiny, the Compaq's AGP graphics card is built onto the motherboard. No AGP slot has been provided.

Upgrade your sound

You do get four PCI slots, though. Only one of these is occupied, by a pre-installed V.90 fax/modem. Adding a new soundcard of superior quality to the integral one is thus possible. The review system was supplied with a decent 17-inch monitor. The mouse and Internet keyboard, both Logitech, are of excellent quality. Although the software bundle is not as good as Tiny's, you still get Adaptec's Easy CD Creator, Microsoft Works and a passable software DVD player. Connecting to the Net is nice and easy. The Windows desktop has installation wizards for five ISPs. The supplied documentation is excellent – as with the Tiny, the Presario is aimed at PC virgins. Although far from cutting-edge, it's more than acceptable for everyday tasks.

THE VERDICT

Features	★★★★☆
Ease of use	★★★★★
Value	★★★★☆
Overall	★★★★☆

TOP TIPS

- ! Try not to put off buying a new computer. Admittedly, better and faster machines are always around the corner, but you'll miss out on the benefits of ownership for as long as you delay!
- ! Find out about the PCs that your friends and colleagues own. Would they recommend the brand? What about after-sales service?
- ! If a price sounds too good to be true, it probably is! Check that the monitor, VAT and delivery charges are included.
- ! The faster the processor, the better. If you're on a tight budget, find out whether the processor can be updated to a faster model at a later date.
- ! Soft modems eat away at your PC's processing power, so go for hardware modems when you can. External modems are more cumbersome, but their status LEDs tell you at a glance whether you're still connected.
- ! Larger cases (tower) are better for upgrading – smaller sizes (micro) are ideal where space is limited.
- ! You may be tempted by the software bundle – but are the programs likely to be useful?
- ! Don't spend out for hardware that you don't need. If you're not a gaming freak, why specify the latest 'gee-whiz' 3D graphics card?





Contact: Atlas

URL: www.atlasplc.com

Phone: (020) 8532 6515

Price: £997.58

4. Atlas Meridian D700

THIS PC, BUILT into a standard mini-tower case, is the only one of the group not to take the Intel route. At the heart of the machine is a 700MHz AMD Duron. This is basically a cut-down Athlon. There's a sensible 128Mb of RAM, with two free slots for expansion. You also get 20Gb of hard disk space, an 8x DVD-ROM and a 4x CD-RW drive. Internet connectivity is catered for by an internal V.90 fax/modem. We're pleased to report that the AGP graphics card is not integrated onto the motherboard. As a result, the nVidia GeForce2 MX AGP 4x graphics with 32Mb video RAM, can be upgraded. We were also impressed with the supplied monitor, which is a 17-inch CTX model.

Expand away

As far as expansion goes, the motherboard gives you two rear-mounted USB ports, and three vacant PCI slots for peripherals. There's also room for another hard drive in the case and vacant 5.25-inch and 3.5-inch drive bays for additional peripherals. Bundled software includes Windows '98, an excellent software DVD player, Ahead's Nero CD mastering application and Lotus SmartSuite.

The performance from the D700 is excellent. It's nearly as fast as the Pentium III-based Dell machine. We did have occasional crashes, though, and on a couple of occasions the machine refused to boot properly. In Atlas' defence, the machine was assembled and configured extremely quickly to meet our deadline. On the whole, the Meridian D700 is fast and upgrade-friendly.

THE VERDICT

Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★☆
Value	★★★★★
Overall	★★★★☆



Contact: Dell

URL: www.dell.co.uk

Phone: (0870) 152 4850

Price: £999.99

5. Dell Dimension 4100

AT THE HEART of the Dimension you'll find a fully-blown 733MHz Pentium processor. Indeed, the Dimension has gone for performance rather than extras. You don't get a CD-RW drive – although one could be added at a later date, thanks to a vacant 5.25-inch drive bay. There is a 12x DVD-ROM drive, though. Other fixtures include a 15Gb hard disk drive, and 128Mb of RAM. The Dimension's audio capabilities are the best of the group, courtesy of a Creative Soundblaster Live. We also found that the supplied Harman/Kardon speakers were above the norm. Like Atlas, Dell has plumped for the upgrade-friendly option of an AGP graphics card instead of relying on motherboard chipper. The card in question is a nVidia TNT2 M64 with 32Mb of RAM. Die-hard gamers will probably want to upgrade in time, though.

Fast as you like

Dell has made this machine easy to upgrade. There are five PCI slots, although the soundcard and a V.90 fax/modem take up two of these. Space in the 3.5-inch bay will accommodate another hard disk and there are two USB ports. Windows '98 apart, the software bundle includes software DVD playback and Microsoft Works.

The Dimension was the fastest machine of the group – processor-intensive chores like Photoshop filters and MP3 encoding were conducted in double-quick time. Our only criticism was an exceptionally-noisy processor fan (a sample fault, we assume).

THE VERDICT

Features	★★★★☆
Ease of use	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Overall	★★★★★

JARGON BUSTER



AGP (Accelerated Graphics Port)

A special expansion bus for graphics cards. It dramatically improves the processing of 3D graphics and full-motion video.



USB: Universal Serial Bus

A high-speed 'plug-and-play' serial data connection now finding its way onto printers, cameras and scanners. Ideal for notebooks, most modern examples of which have USB ports.



DVD (Digital Versatile Disk)

A storage medium that will accommodate between 4.7Gb and 15.9Gb of data. Although currently popular as a video playback medium (DVD Video), it can also be used as a high-capacity CD-ROM (DVD-ROM). DVD-ROM drives are compatible with these, as well as ordinary music CDs and CD-ROMs.



Hard Disk

Used to store programs and data. The bigger the better – these days, 10Gb is a sensible minimum.



RAM (Random Access Memory)

Your computer's main source of memory. Software instructions and data are stored in RAM, before being passed to the processor. The more the better, because less use is made of the much-slower hard disk.



Processor

The 'brain' of your computer. It reads instructions from your software applications and tells your computer what to do. The faster the better, because tasks will be completed in less time.



V.90

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QUICK TEST

Cute cam

The QuickCam Web from Logitech not only takes great clips – it's a work of art as well

Contact: Logitech

URL: www.logitech.com

Phone: 020 7309 0127

Price: £59.99

WE DON'T SEE a lot of hardware that has us cooing like excited children, but the Logitech QuickCam Web had the girlies in a right tizz. There's no denying that this is one supremely attractive Webcam, and looks so cute, the residents of the Hundred Acre Wood could use it, should they ever use Web conferencing.

Eventually we managed to contain our delirium at such

beauty, and got round to plugging the camera in our PC. Once it was up and running, we weren't disappointed with what we found. The picture quality is pretty good, although as with much of the Logitech range, isn't quite as sharp as some of the other Webcams we've seen. But that's a minor niggle, and there are more than enough options available for you to transform your AVI or snapshot into the brilliantly shot dream you always thought it should be.

Pretty and easy

Controls in the QuickCam Web have been simplified, to the extent that it really is no more than a case of a couple of clicks on that ever trusty mouse to capture the real world on camera. In fact, setting the camera up didn't take the traditional 20 minutes to

achieve, and was actually quite a snappy process.

But the main selling point of the QuickCam Web is Logitech's agreement with Spotlife, which enables you to set up, take and upload your moving images using a simple three step process. Although this sounds as likely as William Hague becoming Prime Minister, we've seen it in action, and it does work. Forget about all of that HTML rubbish, and FTP can just sod off as well. Just follow the easy steps and you're ready to bore the world with your opinions on life, the universe and the VengaBoys.

So there you have it. A good-looking camera, which simplifies the process so that a monkey could take pictures, and is also powerful enough to please the expert.

THE VERDICT

Features	★★★★☆
Ease of use	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Overall	★★★★★

QUICK TEST

Keep your social life

Scared of missing that all-important phone call when you're on the Net? This little gizmo will sort you out

Contact: Comtech

URL: www.ctl-bolton.com

Phone: 01942 851800

Price: £29.99

YOU KNOW THE score. You're just getting down to some serious online chat about the good old days when the Thompson Twins ruled the Earth, and although you know that your mate is going to give you a call, you just can't tear yourself away from reminiscing about the talented trio. The result of this unhealthy obsession with all things rooted in the Eighties? Your mate can't

get through, and you miss out on some much-needed gossip and slander.

Well, there's no need to fret about this calamitous situation any longer. For just under £30 pounds, you can banish those blues forever, and get your hands on a beautiful orange sec-through thing as well. Using the ever-handy Call Waiting service from BT, the Alert 510 will flash up all kinds of lights whenever someone is trying to call you, and unlike the standard BT fare, you won't be cut off from the Net.

No more missed calls

Just plug in your phone line and PC modem cable into the back of the Internet Alert 510, and Robert immediately becomes known to you as 'uncle'. No software to jiggle about with, no fancy malarkey to get lost in. Just connect, and then go.

Should you ever be fortunate to receive a phone call when you're online, the

Alert 510 will flash red for up to 15 seconds, beeping at the same time in case you don't notice it. You don't have to disconnect from your modem or anything so complex. Pick up the phone, and this will be done automatically, and you can get to talking immediately. If you don't answer during this 15 seconds, the red light will be replaced by a green light, for another minute. For some reason, this sounds much more complicated on paper than it actually is during practice. Honest.

As one of the easiest pieces of kit we've used, we can't really fault the Internet Alert 510 for what it does, which is exactly what it says on the tin (well, the box). Our only niggle is whether you'd want to spend 30 quid on a call minder.

THE VERDICT

Features	★★★★☆
Ease of use	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Overall	★★★★★

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QUICK TEST

For those on a budget...

As one of the cheaper digital cameras on the market, the Gsmart 350 still falls short of being the bargain of the millennium

Contact: Mustek

URL: www.mustek.com

Phone: 0800 035 3353

Price: £149

YOU'VE SEEN THE adverts for Stella Artois maintaining its status as 'reassuringly expensive', and there are many things in life that can apply to. You get what you pay for most of the time, and that's why the Gsmart 350 from Mustek is unlikely to win 'digital camera of the year' awards, except maybe at Mustek.

While many digital cameras selling at this price discard the LCD display on the back, Mustek at least provides a decent

attempt at something similar in the viewfinder itself. Apart from the fact that this somehow caused us to keep walking into things, the menus seem to have been designed on a Commodore 64, such is their bizarre look.

Scary stuff

Probably the worst aspect of the camera nearly turned it into a winner for us. When you look through the viewfinder, you see a digitally created scene in front of you. Because the power of the Gsmart 350 only really matches the Box Brownie, the real-time images aren't rendered as accurately or smoothly as you might like. While this could be a

very bad thing, we loved the strange and eerie *Blair Witch Project* style vistas that appeared before our eyes.

When you come to take your pictures, it's unlikely you'll be astounded at their quality. On our model, we only had a measly 444Kb to play with, meaning we could only take a few pictures at a time before having to upload them. There is a 2X zoom function, but photos can only be either 640x480 or 320x240.

So, you come to your lovely PC to upload armed with what you know is three small pictures. Ah, but there's another surprise for you. The strange and otherworldly viewfinder view is

actually represented in the pictures themselves, leaving you with a small collection of small weirdly coloured and funny-looking photos of friends and family. While we were shocked and quite frankly scared at first, we've come to love the fact that the Gsmart 350 instantly gives you effects you would have to spend ages in Photoshop for with other cameras.

THE VERDICT

Features	★★★★☆
Ease of use	★★★★☆
Value	★★★★☆
Overall	★★★★☆



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software on test

PANTS OR PERFECTION? THE HOTTEST INTERNET SOFTWARE IS TRIED, TESTED AND RATED

Browsing for booty

Tempted by the recent spate of new browsers hitting our fine shores? Let **Thomas Watson** talk you through five of the best

After you've bought your PC, you will want to use the Internet. Hey presto, as if by magic, Internet Explorer is already installed for you. Armed with this wondrous piece of free software, you can instantly start investigating, so why should it ever cross your mind to use any other browser?

Ever since Internet Explorer was first bundled with Windows 95, it's gone from strength to strength. Most people would never think to install another browser to do the same job. But, like the man who's spent the past ten years asleep with a

clothes peg over his nose, it's time to wake up and smell the roses.

In our group test, we look at five of the best browsers on the market. We decided to go for standalone browsers, meaning that the ever-impressive NeoPlanet couldn't be considered, as it's basically a skin changer. We'd have been foolish not to include Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator in the test, so we're giving you a treat by reviewing the latest versions of each of these. Hell, the beta version of Netscape Navigator 6 is fresher than cheeky Will Smith spouting wisecracks eating a salad he's just bought.



You'll find all these programs on this month's Practical Internet CD-ROM

BROWSERS TESTED

1. Opera

Product: Opera 4.02

Company: Opera Software

File size: 1.80Mb

Status: \$39 (30-day free trial)

URL: www.opera.com

THIS MULTI-WINDOWED gem aims to harmonise your Web browsing, offering you a fine collection of features to tempt you away from the big two. Like a

browser version of Barry McGuigan, Opera hits the scales at a measly 1.80Mb. However, enough power and punch has been packed into this beauty to more than make up for its diminutive stature.

Make no mistake, Opera possesses all of the features you'd ever need to move around your favourite Britney sites, and more. The multi-panelled interface lets you view four sites at the same time without any nasty toolbar-fiddling action, and it's as easy as pie to move

around each window, and find just the right Britney pic to peruse. But multi-window browsing is becoming as common as a Glaswegian slapper with wavy perm and mini skirt cackling loudly in the pub. The first port of call for any software maker looking to



The magic of multi-windowed browsing will be yours in seconds using Opera's straightforward interface

offer something a bit different to the biggies is to cram in more than a few extra simultaneous window features.

Finger mouse

In our opinion, by far the best thing about Opera is that it finally presents the opportunity for the mouse-fatigued Web veteran to discard his trusty rodent sidekick. For once, you can flit around the page with nothing more than your keyboard in tow, making use of the army of shortcuts at your disposal. We're very big

fans of keyboard shortcuts at *Practical Internet*, so we love this feature more than just about anything else in the world. Forget about all those crazy moving-your-hands-across-to-your-mouse shenanigans, and just settle yourself down for some fast browsing.

This is a mighty browser indeed, but

there's something very off-putting about the whole concept of paying for a browser. It's such a good browser, in fact, that we'd be using it now, if it weren't for the nasty spectre of filthy cash raising its head.

THE VERDICT

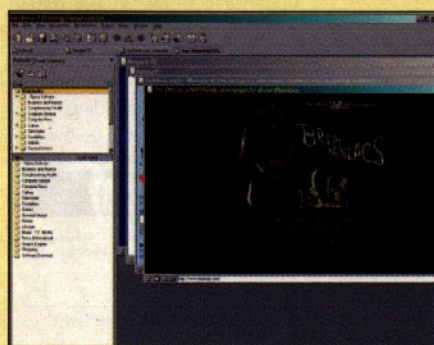
What's good:

Feature-laden browser with good keyboard shortcuts and multi-window options

What's bad:

Costs money. Eurgh!

Overall ★★★★★



The aptly-named Hotlist allows you to move between your favourite ever Web sites

2. Internet Explorer 5.5

Product: Internet Explorer

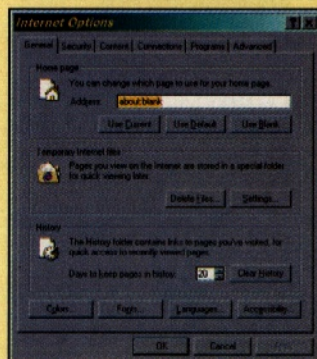
Company: Microsoft

File size: 48.8Mb

Status: Free

URL: www.microsoft.com/windows/ie

IT'S UST ABOUT the most well-known program in the world these days, and claiming that you've



Say what you want about Internet Explorer, but where else do you find such a range of options?

never used Microsoft's standard browser is like stating that you've never even heard of Queen, or listened to the pop/rock/opera classic, *Bohemian Rhapsody*.

The fact that it's bundled with all new PCs means that Microsoft's browser is popular, so there isn't really much point in us giving you a thrilling exposé of the workings of this ubiquitous software accessory. We're all aware of what Internet Explorer can do, from the first time we open up our virgin PC until we become experts at the browsing game.

Having said that, you can lead a horse to water, but you can't force it to wear crotchless panties. There must be something a bit classy about Internet Explorer to stop people discarding it quicker than a lovely woolly cardigan from your granny on Christmas day. Like Alex Ferguson's red and white army, this is well-known for being the very best in the field, with the rest of the pack constantly



The familiar Internet Explorer interface we all know and love

have been designing some new fancy dan buttons and toolbars, instead of adding twiddly functions like Print Preview.

Although Opera offers more in the way of keyboard shortcuts, we love the way that moving around IE using the keyboard is so

tinkering and changing to try and beat the champion.

Same old interface

With the release of the latest IE 5.5, some subtle tweaks have been made to further enhance the intuitive feel of the program. Unfortunately, the interface remains the same. Don't get us wrong, we love the interface – we've grown up on it like everyone else. But it would have been nice to have seen some of the nice touches which made IES on the Mac such a winner. And considering Netscape 6 has that quality Net age feel, you can't help but think that Microsoft should

incredibly easy. And having fiddled about using this particular browser for some years now, we've inevitably got used to exactly what keys do what. What's more, we're so used to the foibles of the browser, that we can forgive the frequent crashes which beset anyone using the program for more than five minutes.

THE VERDICT

What's good:

Powerful. Easy to use. Comes bundled with new PCs and ties in with Windows.

What's bad:

Crashes a lot. Recent changes haven't made that much difference.

Overall ★★★★★

3. Lynx

Product: Lynx 2.8.3

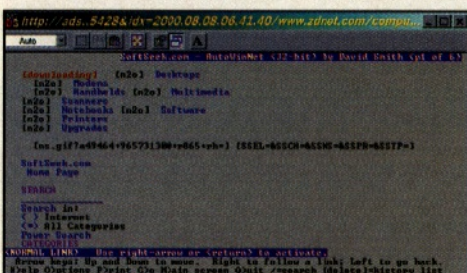
Company: University of Kansas

File size: 701Kb

Status: Free

URL: http://jim.spath.com/lynx_win32

SURE, THIS WEB thing is cool, with its ability to bring multimedia experiences to your desktop in seconds. You can visit crazy new worlds resplendent with animated pictures of people you've never met from your own home.



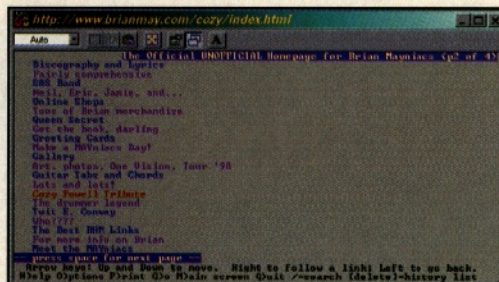
Who needs pictures, when you can be browsing slightly quicker using Lynx?

There are times, though, when you long for something simpler. This is when you should turn to Lynx, possibly the most basic browser available today. Forget about endless banner ads promising to show you more of Britney

Spears than even her mother's seen – this is a text-only browser.

With an interface that tips a grey hat to the classic Sinclair ZX-81 BASIC screen, you're unlikely to be won over by the good looks of this browser. Instead, you'll

ponder incredulously what's in front of your eyes for several minutes, then finally get down to some non-graphical browsing. In all honesty, pages are displayed in a really odd



Grey, wordy and uninspiring? Not on your nelly...

manner, with tables causing all sorts of visual problems as you try to muddle your way through the sea of multi-coloured text.

No-faster stripes

It's no shock to hear that the main idea behind the abolition of graphics is speedier page downloads. Strangely, though, we found that a standard page like www.softseek.com didn't actually reach our screen any quicker using the magic of non-textual page display Lynx antics. Our browsing attempts yielded similar download times as seen in graphical browsers, leading us to ask why we'd bother spending

the same amount of time getting a text-only version.

Lynx presents an interesting idea for browsing, giving you the opportunity to explore the Web in a retro grey text-only environment. Think of Lynx as a browsing John Major – grey and bland to look at, but hiding something charismatic below.

TOP TIP!



When using Lynx as your browser, try to only visit sites that aren't completely graphic-reliant. Disney.com is hardly a winner.

THE VERDICT

What's good:

Slightly quicker, no-nonsense browsing

What's bad:

Takes longer than it should to download a page. Looks incredibly tedious

Overall ★★★★★

4. Netscape Navigator 6

Product: Navigator 6

Company: Netscape

File size: Massive

Status: Free

URL: www.netscape.com

THIS LATEST VERSION of Netscape's Microsoft-bashing browser is so new that it hasn't even reached a full launch yet. The beta version we tested was as

reliable as an RAC man in the middle of the night, though, and contained more than enough features to be included in our test.

The first thing you'll notice when opening Navigator 6 is that it doesn't really look like any other PC browser on the market at the moment. Rather oddly, it actually resembles the current Mac Internet Explorer shell, and proves that you only have to make the most subtle of changes to

transform a bog standard browser into a winning team.

All of the features you'd expect crop up here, but seem to be working better, if only because the interface is a dream to stare at, while your piddly 56kb modem scans through the



It's so new, it doesn't even exist properly yet. We're still waiting for word on when the full version of Navigator 6 will be unleashed

Web for the latest information on Ricky Martin. So many pretty little icons litter the toolbar and surrounds of Navigator that we simply couldn't be bothered to try them all, but we're convinced that they'll work as well as they look.

Slow navigation

Navigating using Navigator isn't as easy as with the ubiquitous Internet Explorer. As fans of minimal browsing, we would have taken great pleasure in discarding the beautiful buttons in favour of more browsing space. Alas, we were forced to use that horrible mouse thing time and time again, leading to longer time spent online than we'd have liked.

Navigator works like a dream, though, and transports you to your

favourite sites at least as quickly as Microsoft's latest attempt. The program's tied in to all kinds of Netscape malarkey, so that you can reach things like Netscape Messenger from within the pretty browser interface. It's difficult to think of one reason why this isn't a better browser than Internet Explorer, but we still can't see people transferring from IE to this, when fundamentally, it does the same thing.

THE VERDICT

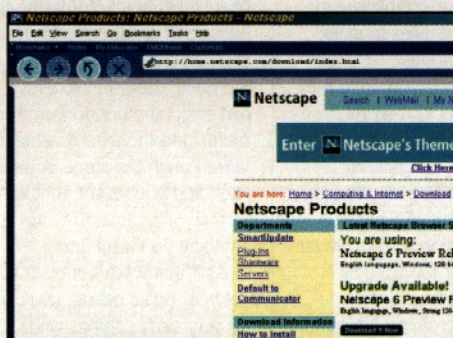
What's good:

Looks fantastic. Easy to use. Free

What's bad:

Doesn't do anything fundamentally different to Internet Explorer

Overall ★★★★★



The new interface looks so much nicer than any other browser has managed yet

5. AtomNet

Product: AtomNet PE

Company: Change7

File size: 678Kb

Status: \$19 (30-day trial free)

URL: www.change7.com

IF YOU'RE OF the opinion that the constant scuffles between Microsoft and Netscape are nothing more than calculated marketing ploys, then you're a very cynical person indeed. But if

you can't get over your petty little prejudices, you might want to try AtomNet as an alternative.

This is an ideal browser for anyone keen on escaping any corporate rubbish. Running from a teeny-weeny 678kb download (smaller even than the Lynx download), AtomNet has everything that you'd want to get on the road to browsing success. As if that wasn't enough to be getting on with, the maker, Change7, has even managed to avoid the common problem of making the interface look like it's been created by Stevie Wonder.

Everything in AtomNet looks simple to use, and that's because it is. You want to go back a page, click on the back arrow. You want to refresh the page you're on, then click on the refresh icon. By cramming everything into

such a petite download, Change7 has filtered out all of the unnecessary rubbish seen on so many bigger browsers. With this program, the choice is to browse, or turn it off. There's no middle ground of 'virtual browsing'.

Zippping the atom

We were mightily impressed by the speed of page downloads, with everything zipping along like a modern day Alan Wells out of the starting blocks. This is probably the only browser we tested that made any real difference to the speed offered by the big pair, without compromising on the basics. And just as you're pulling out that credit card to purchase the full version of the program, have a shot of the Zip functions included. AtomNet can browse



Simple, effective browsing is easy-peasy with AtomNet

whole zipped sites without going through the rigmarole of unzipping everything first. Now, if only you didn't have to shell out somewhere in the region of fifteen quid to get your hands on a full copy, life would be rosy in the garden of AtomNet.

THE VERDICT

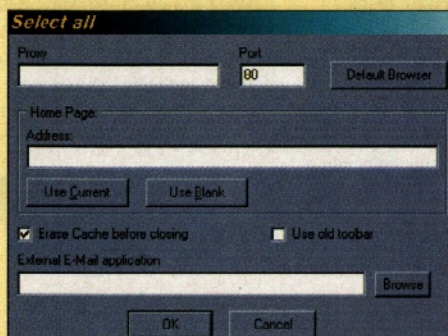
What's good:

Small file, good browser. Manages to cram in all of the basic features you need

What's bad:

A bit on the basic side. Isn't free

Overall ★★★★★



The range of options available to you isn't exactly awe-inspiring

QUICK TEST

The complete Web design package

Practicalinternet
BEST BUY ★★★★★

Daunted by the complicated area of site design? Worried by the weird world of Web creation? Serif WebPlus 6 is the answer to your problems

Product: Serif WebPlus 6 Home Page Creator

Company: Serif

Phone: 0800 376 7070

Price: £29.99

URL: www.serif.com

IF THE WHOLE concept of Web design leaves you as cold as a corpse on Quincy's table, we might have found something to breathe some much needed heat into those Web-weary limbs. Boasting a collection of

features that would make even the deadpan forensic expert himself smirk a smile of sheer pleasure, Serif WebPlus 6 will lead you from despair into unadulterated Net nirvana.

This might be one of the most comprehensive WYSIWYG page designers aimed at beginners that we've ever got our hands on. As if nabbing a highly impressive designer wasn't enough to be getting on with, the package also has a beefy bonanza of clip art and fonts to keep you happy through those cold winter nights. Twenty thousand images? Six hundred GIF images? Free Web space? Why, of course, sir.

Even if you're a Web page virgin, Serif WebPlus 6 will still have you paged up and showing off to your mates within five minutes. Using any one of the 110 page wizards, you need only type in a few relevant details to

have a fairly respectable site in less time than it takes to make and eat a Pot Noodle.

Once you move on up to the more traditional WYSIWYG format of the program, the range of options increases dramatically. Worry not, though, for any problems of a page design persuasion will remain far from your door for just a bit longer. Placing that all-time favourite image of rock soulster Michael Bolton on your page is nothing more than a matter of dragging and dropping 'The Voice' into where he needs to be. Type where you want, when you want, and your page will soon begin to build up towards the masterpiece that we all know it can be.

It's the extras that count

But you can do all of this with just about any WYSIWYG designer worth its salt. We want to know about the cool extra features that help make this stand out from the crowd like Michael Jordan at a pygmy convention. We particularly like the option where you can create your own logo from scratch. Okay, so if you were being hyper-critical, you could argue that all this does is give you some weirdly drawn, garishly coloured text. But we rise above such petty-mindedness, and embrace the chance to create a curvy pink version of your name for the world to see.

Have you ever gazed in awe at one of those things where the text scrolls along inside a box? We certainly have, and have even pondered using nasty HTML to achieve such a

beautiful effect. So, imagine the joy we felt on discovering that you can create an 'animated marquee' easily in WebPlus6. Just select the option from the menu, and the wizard will take you through the steps. A minute later, and you've got your very own scrolling text box, saying anything you want it to.

As if that wasn't enough to get your pulse racing, you can do very similar things with creating links, adding movies and all kinds of interactive goodies. While the interface could so easily have been nasty and cluttered, it's as easy to navigate around as a quiet town centre with street signs every three feet, and a computerised compass telling you exactly where to go next. With most of the functions easily accessible at all times, we failed in every way to get lost in the interface, no matter how hard we tried.

It may already be apparent to you that we quite like this program. In fact, it's probably the best beginners' WYSIWYG package we've tried in recent memory. With its impressive range of features, and undoubted ease of use, we think you can't go wrong with Serif WebPlus 6. Not only that, but the CD is filled with millions of weird and wonderful pictures and animations. What more do you want for 30 quid?

THE VERDICT

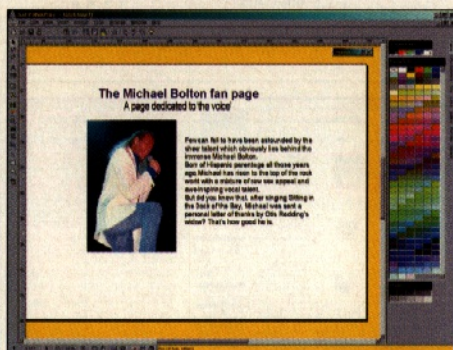
What's good:

Very easy to use. Loads of features. Crammed full of extras. Really cheap.

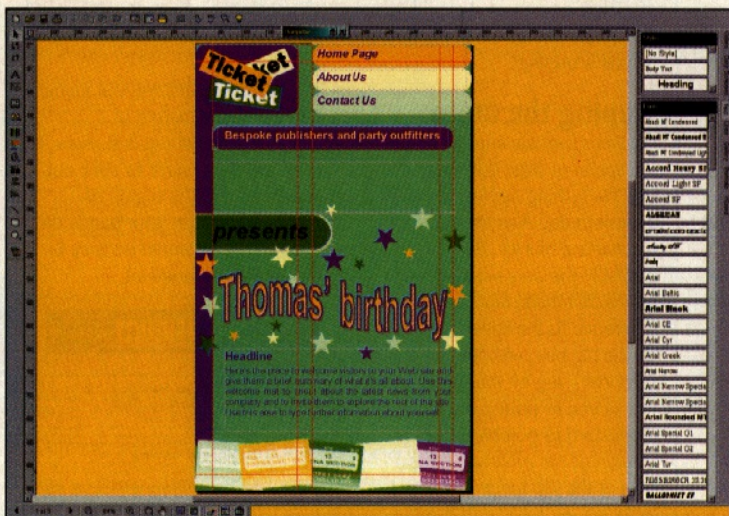
What's bad:

Eh... doesn't come bundled with free Quincy videos?

Overall ★★★★★



Creating your fan site takes only a few minutes in the arms of this intuitive interface



Working from the WebPlus6 templates can create some nice results

Student first aid

McAfee's latest protection package will appeal to everyone – not just stressed-out students

Product: Student Survival Kit

Company: McAfee

Phone: 0800 0927160

Price: £29.95

URL: www.mcafee.co.uk



STUDENTS HAVEN'T BEEN terribly lucky recently. What with having to take a poxy loan instead

of getting the traditional grant, and work getting harder and more competitive, life just isn't the bunch of roses it once was. We were very happy, then, to see the arrival of the Student Survival Kit from McAfee.

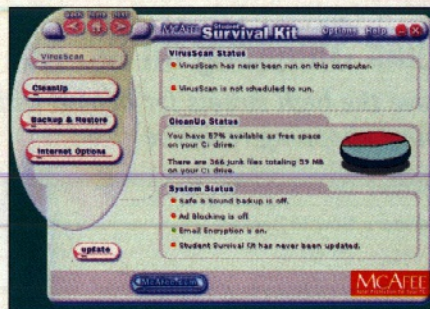
With a host of worthwhile and easy to use features, this software could benefit anyone with a PC – not just those still studying. If you want to keep your PC in tip-top condition, there's a whole range of straightforward functions aimed at preventing desktop disasters. The well-known and popular VirusScan is one of the most powerful virus detection and removal programs available on the market today, and should cope with any infections you pick up on the Web. Blocking such nasties as Trojan horses and

evil Microsoft Word macros, there should be no worries about losing your work to rogue worms.

We were particularly taken with the Registry fixer, which lets you take a snapshot of your system settings, and return them to this state should a disaster occur.

Ban the ads

The Internet section of the package is good, too. Regular readers of *Practical Internet* might be aware of our fervent disregard for banner ads, so the inclusion of an ad removal implement pleases us no end. And to save on memory space in your brain, there's a Browser Buddy to help you manage all of the passwords we pick up on the Web. Just when you thought you'd seen enough, you can also remove what McAfee calls 'Internet junk' from your PC – basically sorting out the



The range of adkilling options would rival many programs dedicated to the art

Temporary Internet Files in a sensible manner.

There are products that do the same as the individual elements of this package, but are you ever likely to get your hands on something so comprehensive anywhere else? We think not. Our advice is to go out now and buy it.

THE VERDICT

What's good:

Comprehensive range of products to keep your PC running in tip-top condition.

What's bad:

Aimed at students.

Overall ★★★★★

Net traffic control

Get your site noticed before others with the help of Traffic Builder

Product: Web Site Traffic Builder Pro

Company: Intelliquis

Phone: 01752 895100

Price: £49.95

URL: www.intelliquis.com



THERE'S NOT REALLY much point in spending months designing the best site you can muster with your limited talents, and uploading it with all the care and attention of a master craftsman, only to stumble at the first hurdle of actually getting people to your divine pages.

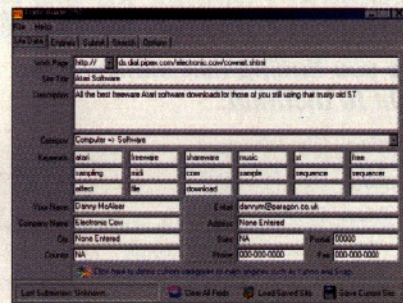
This is why packages like Web Site Traffic Builder Pro are cropping up as often as the latest fly-on-the-wall documentary/home redecoration show. If you use them well, you'll find them to be nothing less than a total boon to your Net life.

Traffic Builder works on pretty basic principles. You type in the URL of your site, and enter as many metatags as you can cobble together without lying too much. Throw in a description of the site

and some information about you, and five minutes later, you'd have started the process without really trying.

Submit to your heart's content

When you come to deciding where to submit said site, we couldn't help but notice that claims of over 3,600 search engines was stretching the truth slightly. In our list, we were privy to just under a thousand of those searching marvels, although we're sure that some of these could be construed, with some poetic license, as performing more than one function. If you're going big on the searching game, you'll do what we did and greedily select all of the engines. You might find that this takes a bit of time, as you'd imagine submitting details to nearly a thousand search engines would. However, the display always keeps you informed of what's going on, so



Setting up Traffic Builder to submit your site to hundreds of search engines isn't very difficult

you're never in doubt as to which engines have maligned you and which are benevolent.

There are a myriad of programs doing similar things to Traffic Builder on the market, but we were very impressed with the ease with which we achieved decent results.

THE VERDICT

What's good:

Really, really easy to use. Quickly achieves results.

What's bad:

Doesn't give you quite as much control as some similar products.

Overall ★★★★★

NET SHOPPING

Home Shopping on the Net

Leave the high streets far behind with this handy online shopping resource

Author: David & Geoffrey Young

Publisher: How To Books

Price: £9.99

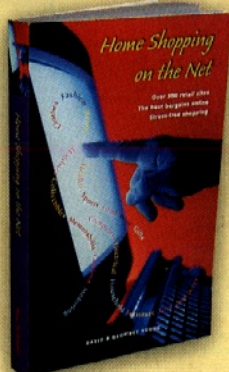
URL: www.howtobooks.co.uk

ISBN: 1 - 85703 - 603 - 1

USING THE WEB instead of the high street shop is still a daunting experience for many people. *Home Shopping on the Net* aims to give stress-free shopping by putting you in touch with hundreds of online retailers.

The book features both a product index and a suppliers index, making it easy enough to find what you want. It gives an independent review of each site, and there are also lots of useful details about any hidden charges.

The main problem is the lack of any pictures or illustrations at all, anywhere. This makes reading the book extremely heavy going. Though there are recommended deals it's a struggle for any but the most hardened Net shopper. That's a shame, because the information here is all up-to-date and well written. It just doesn't have any colour or life.



Sometimes it can be confusing as to where to start shopping on the Internet. This book aims to help you find your way

THE VERDICT

What's good:

Clear and concise

What's bad:

A bit dull, really.

Overall ★★☆☆☆

FIND A JOB

Job Hunt on the Net

Looking to survive the urban jungle? Give this book a go and give your career a boost

Author: Julie-Ann Amos

Publisher: Essentials

Price: £5.00

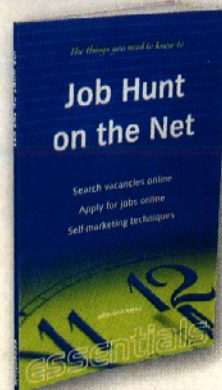
URL: n/a

ISBN: 1 - 85703 - 637 - 9

IT'S NO SECRET that jobs are less stable these days and it's all too easy to find yourself on the wrong side of redundancy. *Job Hunt on the Net* is a guide to educate those who want to do away with the old-fashioned way of looking for a job, and use the Net to kick-start a career. There are thousands of recruitment Web sites and this book is a good way to keep up-to-date with new methods of job hunting.

Job Hunt is not a weighty tome; there are six chapters but they're short and simple, and you can glide through the guide with the minimum of effort.

It makes good use of bullet points, stressing what's particularly important. It's a shame there's no sample CV and though it's easy to get around, those who want an in-depth analysis of job-hunting in the 21st Century probably need to look elsewhere.



Feeling as though you're on the employment dung pile? *Job Hunt on the Net* could help you find the right career for you

THE VERDICT

What's good:

Simple, very simple

What's bad:

Lacking in depth

Overall ★★☆☆☆

MONEY MATTERS

Personal Finance on the Net

Are you finding that money is too tight to mention?

Author: John Whiteley

Company: How To Books

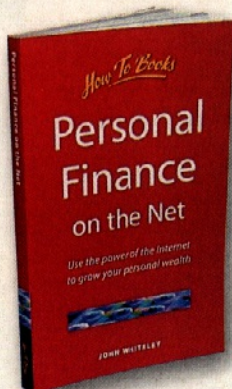
Price: £9.99

URL: www.howtobooks.co.uk

ISBN: 1 - 85703 - 594 - 1

ANOTHER ONE FROM the 'How To' stable, this book addresses every aspect of financial management from first time bank accounts and savings to pensions and investments. At the beginning of each chapter, there's advice to look out for, and all of the most important areas of finance are covered.

One major gripe, though. There's no rating system for the sites that are reviewed. This leaves you in the dark as to what's good and what's bad. This gives the impression that the writer has just checked the information pages of each site without really conducting any in-depth research on them. That may not necessarily be true, of course, but it makes you wonder when you see The Motley Fool's mission statement printed out next to a screenshot of... er, the Motley Fool's mission statement. That aside, if you really like lists, get a phone book. It's free.



Although a lot of the information is good solid advice, you can't help feeling that it should really offer you a little more in the way of content

THE VERDICT

What's good:

Lots of sites listed

What's bad:

Reading home pages doesn't qualify as research

Overall ★★☆☆☆

OF HOUSE AND HOME

Property Developer Secrets

E-book confessions of property developers and buy-to-let landlords

Author: Richard Davies and Neil Lewis

Company: Jojaffa Ltd

Price: £24.95

URL: www.propertydevelopersecrets.co.uk

ISBN: 1 - 903578 - 00 - 0

THIS PLEASING E-BOOK was sent to us by its publishers Jojaffa and promises to make you lots of money without risk (well, sort of). It's very easy to download from the Internet and you can get a free sample chapter to start you off. This lets you know what it's all about before buying, though there's enough information on the Web site to start you off.

If you're investing in a property or thinking about developing, then you won't go far wrong with this. Houses are the most expensive item most of us will ever buy, and help through the minefield is always welcome. This is more about generating income from your property, and it looks reasonable enough. The possibility of making £20k in three months in your spare time is probably optimistic – but if that's the big secret of property developing, it might be time to buy a house.

Property Developer Secrets

...make money without risk*

by Richard Davies
Neil Lewis

Budding Del Boys looking to make some money in the property business should have a look at the advice given in *Property Developer Secrets*

THE VERDICT

What's good:

You can get it on the Net, and you might make a packet

What's bad:

It's 25 quid

Overall ★★☆☆☆

TRIAL
CD



Build
an online
business with

ecBuilder Pro

multiactive.

E-commerce is not just for big business any more...

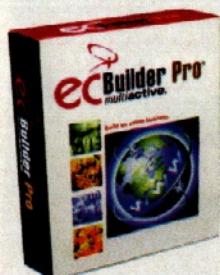
Use **ecBuilder Pro** to create a professional Web site to accept orders and enquiries online.

Point and click your way to a ready-to-go business Web site as you work through the Wizard-driven input screens:

- Fill in your company and product information
- Enhance your site with logos, animations, product shots and other graphics
- Add your catalogue items
- Choose your template design and colour scheme
- Upload your site to the World Wide Web!

ecBuilder Pro offers you over 500 combinations of customisable templates. These templates are designed with business in mind, have clear navigational features, small file size, and advanced functionality. This allows you to create and establish your own Web site and the flexibility to manage it as and when you choose, without having to rely on expensive external resources.

Select from international currencies including the Euro. Add tax and shipping charges to accept orders from anywhere in the world. The shopping cart enables your customers to purchase multiple products from you safe in the knowledge that their details are protected using digital certificates for secure transactions.



Each Web site created by **ecBuilder Pro** includes:

- **Profile page:** For your company profile, address and contact details
- **100 Marketing pages:** Promote your business with descriptions and graphics
- **Storefront page:** To showcase your products and services
- **2,000 Catalogue items:** Featuring a Web page and graphic for each product or service offered
- **Built-in browser:** Simulate and maintain your Web site on your own computer using the preview mode
- **Order and Enquiry forms:** Each page or catalogue item links to a secure Web-based messaging system for customers to place orders and enquiries with you
- **Site promotion:** Your Web site will be automatically submitted to Internet search engines based on the keywords you choose
- **ecOrderDesk:** To accept and despatch orders from your new online customers as well as creating sales reports.

Survey your visitors. This valuable shopper information with order or enquiry information can then be transferred to your accounting, and customer management programs such as Maximizer, for order processing and fulfilment.

Multiactive Software Ltd
Bridge House, Bridge Avenue
Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 1RR England

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ecBuilder Pro
multiactive.

TRIAL CD

☐ Please send me a free **ecBuilder Pro** Trial CD

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Tel: _____ Fax: _____

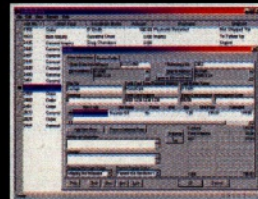
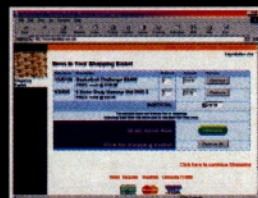
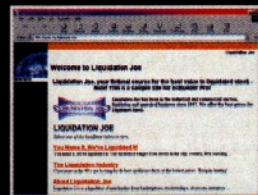
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Why not complete the coupon and fax the **whole** page to us?

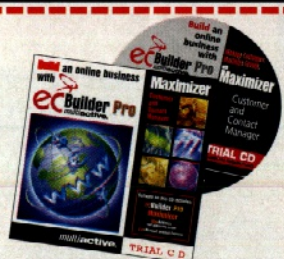
Alternatively download this and other trial products from: **www.multiactive.co.uk**



Pro



Visit our
ecBuilder Pro
demonstration site at
www.ecbuilder.co.uk

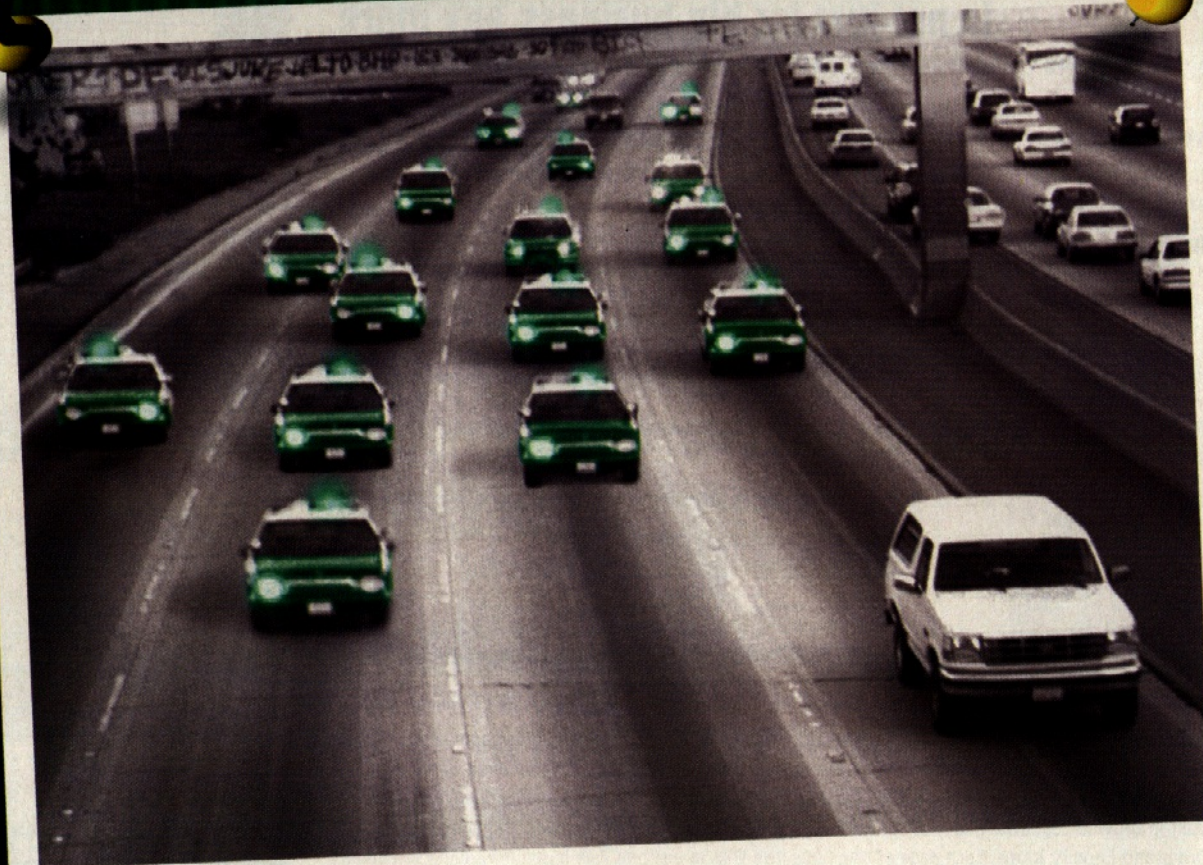


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Web: www.multiactive.co.uk



multiactive.

You can run but you can't hide



WWW.BARRYSWORLD.COM
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The dedicated online service for serious gamers



netgamer

JOYSTICKS AT THE READY! BEN WALKER REVIEWS THE LATEST AND GREATEST NET GAMES FOR YOUR PC



You can almost smell the burning rubber... Grand Prix 3 puts you in the centre of the action

Grand Prix 3

Publisher: Hasbro

Price: £34.99

URL: www.hasbro.com

SINCE THE FIRST release of Formula One Grand Prix in the early year of '94, Grand Prix games are now well known in the ever growing computer empire. A new Grand Prix product has just been released by Hasbro interactive which will undoubtedly be a must for all formula one racing fans. Grand Prix 3 has been in the making for four years and every inch of detail can be noticed when playing.

Grand Prix 3 has 3D-enhanced graphics which make the game look new and exciting. The cars have been put together in great detail, and all of the teams have their correct colours. One gripe is the 1998 stats. With the presence of Damon Hill and the Stewart team, the driver and team options are a bit boring and out-of-date. However, the driver's names and teams can be edited and there's 16 tracks to choose from.

The look and feel of Grand Prix 3 is much improved over the earlier versions. There are



Gentlemen, start your engines! Get ready for speedy, heart-pumping action in Grand Prix 3

Practical internet

BEST BUY ★★★★★

now more objects near the trackside which are shown in more detail. The crowd is now individually rendered and the tracks are copied in every detail. There's also a healthy sprinkling of shadows for that realistic feel.

When playing this game it's always worth comparing it to past efforts. Happily, all the changes have been improvements. Pit crews are now seen and crashes can be witnessed from the back markers. The thrill and involvement of the game makes it a joy to play, especially with a gaggle of mates.

THE VERDICT

What's good:
Outstanding options and exceptional graphics

What's bad:
1998 season stats

Overall ★★★★★



Klingon Academy

Publisher: Interplay

Price: £34.99

URL: www.interplay.com

KLINGON ACADEMY IS another Star Trek game, which provides you with long missions and the chance to become a fleet commander after surviving the tough regime in training school. General Chang sets you various simulated tasks in a long preparation for dangerous shenanigans against the long-time enemy.

You control the aircraft by your cursors, while everything else is controlled by a series of numerical codes. This is not so good, as tapping in the codes can get very frustrating and annoying.



Get spaced out with this great game



Unfortunately, Klingon Academy has many frustrating features. The graphics are reasonable, but compared to other space sim games, aren't exceptional. One bright point, however, is the option of designing your own levels with the mission builder.

If you're flying solo, Klingon Academy is a reasonable space sim, but it crashes and burns when it comes to the multiplayer option. If you have your heart set on a space sim, try something like Allegiance.

THE VERDICT

What's good:
Highly detailed with well acted characters

What's bad:
Half-decent multi-play makes game boring

Overall ★★☆☆☆

The Dukes of Hazard: Racing For Home

Publisher: Ubi Soft

Price: £24.99

URL: www.ubisoft.co.uk

BEEP YOUR TUNEFUL HORN if you ever lusted after Daisy Duke and her Southern-fried antics in the *Dukes of Hazard*. Well, after years of re-runs and memorabilia, the wholesome bunch finally get a PC game. We wouldn't say it had been eagerly awaited, but it surely was expected.



High flying action with those Duke boys

Right now, there's probably an *EastEnders* or *Brookside* cliffhanger in production. This game has all of the characters from the series along with the same automobiles and storylines. These basically revolve around you catching a bad guy or collecting car parts.

The graphics are quite good, even if the cars always tend to look like boxes. It's a shame too that the handling of the vehicles is exaggerated and the tasks are too easy. There are 27 of these missions. Quite a lot you may say. Not when you find out how easy they are. Which probably explains why there are so many - any less and you'd finish the game quicker than Rossio P Coltrane could knock back a pie.

THE VERDICT

What's good:
Twenty seven tasks to complete if bored

What's bad:
Too easy and doesn't hold interest

Overall ★★☆☆☆



on the CD

THIS MONTH'S CD FEATURES FULLY WORKING SOFTWARE THAT LETS YOU SEARCH THE WEB EFFECTIVELY, COMPRESS IMAGES FOR USE ON YOUR SITE AND ADD TEXT LOGOS TO YOUR HOME PAGES

Using the CD-ROM

The minimum recommended specification to run the *Practical Internet* CD is 800 X 600 screen resolution, 16Mb RAM, 16 bit colour, Windows 95/98/2000, (note we do not support Windows 3.1) Intel Pentium or compatible P90. We recommend that all users shut down all other applications while running the CD.

The CD will autorun in Windows 95/98. For users without autorun enabled go to the start menu, select RUN and type d:\PracticalInternet.exe (replacing 'd' with the letter of your CD drive) and press 'Return'.

Damaged discs

We will be please to replace any CD that is cracked, scratched or snapped upon purchase. Return them to the following address: Cover Disc Returns, Paragon Publishing, Paragon House, St Peter's Road, Bournemouth, BH1 2JS. If you experience technical problems, not due to physical damage on the CD, please DO NOT return any discs to us unless requested by the support team.

Missing discs

If you have purchased the magazine and have not received your CD, we will be happy to send you out a replacement disc. Email subs@paragon.co.uk quoting the magazine and issue number, full postal address and daytime phone number.

Problems using the disc

If you encounter problems using the CD or installing the software you can email cdhelp@paragon.co.uk. Questions will be answered twice daily.

Please provide us with as much information about the technical specifications of your machine and the software errors you are receiving as well as quoting the magazine and issue number in your email.

Our helpdesk team will be taking calls about disc installation problems on Wednesday afternoons between 2 and 6pm. Phone 01202 200259.

NOTE: This service can only deal with problems when installing software from our cover CDs. Issues surrounding the use and purchase of software and all Internet service provider queries must be referred to the relevant software publisher, merchant or ISP.



The CD logo
Look out for this logo in the magazine. It tells you which of the programs mentioned in features, or explored in tutorials, are on the *Practical Internet* cover CD-ROM.

SMART SEARCHING WITH BULLSEYE

Find exactly what you want online quickly and efficiently with this fully working searching program

WE KNOW THE problems you can run into trying to find that ever-elusive Web site. Hours spent fiddling about various search engines, failing in every way to find exactly what you were looking for.

That's why we're giving you the excellent BullsEye on our cover CD this month. Say goodbye to those searching tantrums once and for all, and watch as you reach your desired information quicker than you thought possible. And, as we predict hours of searching solutions for you, we're giving you a

quick run-through of how to install and run the program from the CD.

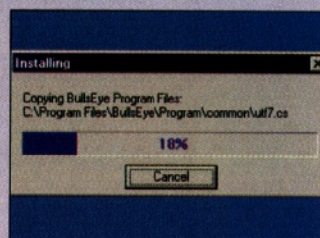
So, what does BullsEye actually do then? Well, it cleverly allows you to search using hundreds and hundreds of search engines, and all from one simple entry. It also promises to use the most advanced searching techniques to sort out the dross for you, so that your search for multi-world cup winning superhero Pele doesn't result in a stream of links to failed indie popsters from Liverpool of the same name. When your results are shown, the key

words you asked for are highlighted in a fetching yellow colour, so that you don't miss the important information you need.

There's one thing you should note before you wade into BullsEye, though. If you're a regular of *Practical Internet*, and follow our advice religiously (if not, why not?), you'll have a highly effective adkiller on your system to filter out adverts from your browser. Well, BullsEye doesn't like these, so disable your adkiller before you set the program up.

FULLY WORKING PROGRAM!
WORTH £50!

SET UP AND SEARCH USING BULLSEYE



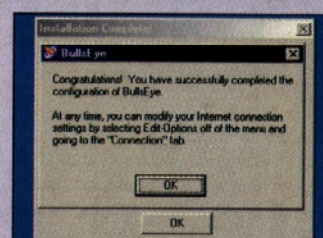
1 Install BullsEye

It's as easy as pie to install BullsEye from our cover CD. Click on the icon in the CD interface to kick the process into action. In less than a few minutes, the program will be installed, and you'll be ready to run it.



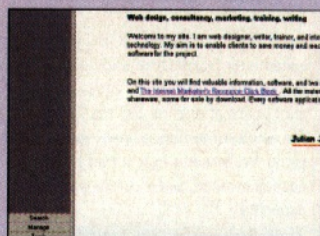
2 Start it up

Double-click on the newly created desktop icon to start BullsEye. You'll see the above screen, where you select the type of connection you're using. If you're using a modem, click on the 'Dial-up Modem Connection'.



3 Finish the setup

You don't have to register BullsEye right now to use it, so click on 'Remind me later' in the Registration box. Now, we've installed BullsEye, close down the automatically opened Readme file, and you're ready to roll.



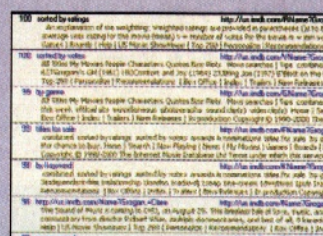
4 The BullsEye interface

This is BullsEye in all its splendour. You'll see it opens on the Julian Jackson home page, but that's not a problem. What we're interested in is the options on the left-hand side of the page. Click the search bar at the bottom-left.



5 Choose a search category

In the list on the left, choose a category to search in - we've gone for Entertainment. In the search criteria, we've gone for 'Find a Movie by Person' and chosen 'Download & Analyze' in the star bar. Press 'Search' to search.



6 Your results

After a brief minute or so, you should have a good selection of results to choose from in the top-half of the screen. To view one of these, just click on it, and it will appear in the bottom-half.

COOL 3D 2.0

CREATE 3D TEXT AND ANIMATIONS WITH THIS FULLY WORKING GRAPHICS PACKAGE

IF THERE'S ONE thing that's going to sort your Web site quickly and easily, it's the addition of a fancy natty text logo on your home page. This will not only give your page that professional look so desired by everyone, but will also make it stand out much more than any amount of fiddling can do.



The great thing about this fabulous full program is that it makes creating 3D text effects a walk in the park. Just type in your text, and you can then apply all kinds of effects and animations in seconds. Not only can you give your text nifty bevels and an impressive 3D feel, but you can even apply a whole host of patterns to give it just the look you need. Animating is a doddle, too, so you can finally get that animated GIF logo off the ground.

If you want to find out more about using this superb program, see this month's free cover-mounted book.

FULLY
WORKING
PROGRAM!
WORTH
£50!

Free Mac Stuff

Our marvellous menagerie of Mac morsels

Canvas 7

Use the trial version of this fully-featured graphics package to sort out your Web images and create Web pages. See our tutorial on page 78-79 to create your own home page with Canvas 7.

Eudora 5 (beta)

Give the latest version of Eudora's popular email client a test drive. With all the features you'd expect of a professional program, we like the fact that it can speak the name of your message addresses.

PLUS:

- Aladdin DropStuff 5.5
- Anarchie 3.7 Installer
- AOL Instant Messenger
- DeBabelizer Lite
- Download Deputy
- Outlook Express

Free Net access

Mac users can sign up for free Internet access from Madasafish by loading the software from this month's cover disc. See pages 116 and 117 for more.



Ulead SmartSaver

MAKE YOUR IMAGES WEB-READY WITH THIS EASY TO USE FILE COMPRESSION PROGRAM

THERE'S HARDLY MUCH point in spending months tinkering around to create the dream Web site, only for it to take four hours to download because your pictures are just too big. Try as you might, most of your traditional image editors can't compress your image file sizes beyond a certain point. That's why you want to get into Ulead SmartSaver, the fully-working program we're giving you for nothing this month.



With this excellent package, you can sort out your GIFs and JPEGs so that even the slowest of modems can download those quality holiday snaps from Austria without too much difficulty. Just import your image into the program, adjust your settings, and SmartSaver will automatically compress the file size, without overly affecting the image quality.

You can achieve impressive results with the minimum of effort in SmartSaver, but if you really want to start working wonders on your images, take a look at our book for a full guide to using this useful program.

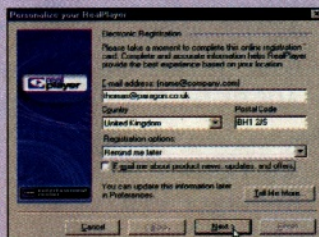
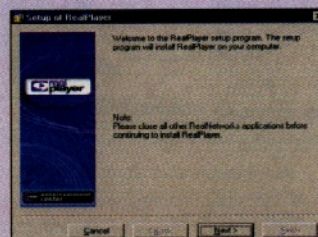
FULLY
WORKING
PROGRAM!
WORTH
£39.95

HOW TO GET STARTED WITH REALPLAYER

Watch online video and listen to Web audio using RealPlayer 8

MORE MEDIA PLAYERS have popped up recently than Pop Tarts at the annual toaster championships, but RealPlayer remains one of the best, with its quality range of features. Apart from the 2,500 radio stations pre-programmed into the player, this latest version also contains handy enhancements to make you happy. In keeping with the craze of providing interesting visuals to accompany your

music, RealPlayer 8 now features some 3D visualisation effects, livening up your Ronan Keating MP3s a treat. As well as playing the standard MP3, WAV, MPEG and AVI audio and video formats, RealPlayer 8 can also handle the unique Real audio and video files. These files manage to compress video especially into amazingly small file sizes, and is used as standard for streaming, so don't be surprised if you turn to RealPlayer.



1 Installing RealPlayer 8

To install RealPlayer 8, just click on the icon from the Browser menu in the CD interface. The files will be copied across to your PC within a couple of minutes, and when this has done, you will be asked for some user information.

2 Your user information

When you see this screen, type in the information. We suggest that you ask to be reminded to register later, and that you untick the 'E-mail me about...' box as well. In the next screen, select your modern speed.



3 Open RealPlayer

Once you've finished, RealPlayer will look like this. We first need to open an audio file to show RealPlayer off. Go to 'File', 'Open', then browse your PC for a suitable file. If you don't have any MP3s, you can use the tracks on a CD.

4 Visualisations

Your tune might be playing, but everything's looking pretty dull at the moment. Under the main 'screen', you'll find a button entitled 'visualisations'. Click on this to bring up the default visualisation - a sheep dancing.



5 Change visuals

We're not that keen on the sheep, so we're changing the visualisation to something more attractive. Just under the screen, you'll see two arrows. Click on these until you find the animation you like. We've gone for Cosmic Belt.

6 Compact mode

Now the animation's sorted, we can switch to the more compact mode of operation. Click on the icon in the top-right of the RealPlayer interface, and you'll see a smaller version of the program, with the animation still playing.

Auction your goodies online

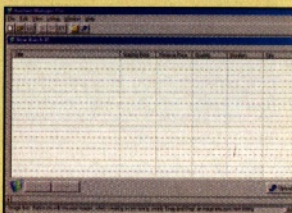
WE BRING YOU ALL THE BEST SOFTWARE TO BUY AND SELL AT THE WEB'S BEST ONLINE AUCTIONS



Auction Manager Pro

Freeware, 5.14Mb

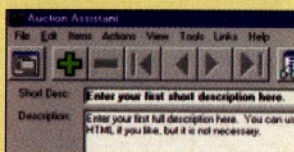
Auction Manager Pro is an offline bulk lister that lets you simultaneously upload and launch hundreds of auctions to some of the best auction sites around. Giving you free image hosting, counter styles and professional templates, you can get your site online with Amazon, eBay and Yahoo!. The program even lets you monitor bid activities, as well as page impressions, and there's a handy postings scheduler to automate the whole process for you.



Auction Assistant Classic

30-day trial, 9.7Mb

This database application lets you manage and track your eBay auctions. Even if you've never even sniffed a piece of HTML before, Auction Assistant Classic lets you create HTML formatted listings quickly and easily. It can also handle the FTP of images to your site, and can even automatically fill in eBay form data for you.

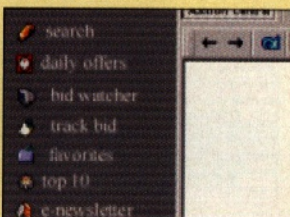


Auction Central

Freeware, 1.17Mb

If you're on the look out for a bargain on the Net, this might just be the program for you. Allowing you to

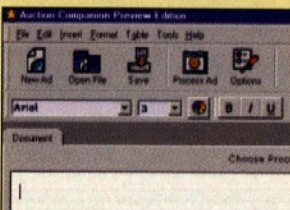
simultaneously search over 200 auction sites, we think you'll find what you're looking for using Auction Central. The program works by letting you tap into an interactive auction network with over 400 online auction sites, daily offers, as well as a multi-auction search of more than 200 auctions from all over the world. All that pales into insignificance, though, when you see the cutesy assistant who'll take you through the perilous steps to auction heaven - all hail Bob the penguin.



Auction Companion

Freeware, 5.22Mb

Using a funky WYSIWYG editor, Auction Companion allows you to easily design professional looking auction listings and adverts. Supporting images, fonts, tables and the like, you can create that impressive site without having to touch the seedy world of HTML. What we like in particular about this handy program is that it lets you use as many images in auction site without ever violating your agreement with the auction site. Auction Companion happily works with Amazon, eBay, Excite and Yahoo!, and lets you post the same advert to multiple auctions.



WEB SITE BUILDING TOOL KIT

Get that dream Web project online quickly and easily with this fantastic line-up of site building and graphics creation software

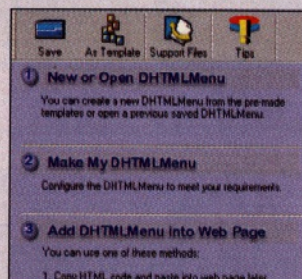
Pop-Up

Freeware, 661Kb

This nifty program lets you create JavaScript menus for the Web. Similar to those you'll find in Netscape and Internet Explorer, these menus can contain any number of context-sensitive items, with no limit to how many sub-menus you include. All the visitor has to do is click anywhere on the page, and the menu appears. Fully customisable with regard to font size and style, each menu is small in size, taking little time to download. As if that wasn't enough, once it's been loaded, it becomes available to all other sub-pages immediately through the browser's cache, easing download time further. This latest version lets you configure the menu to animate the opening of sub-menus, and you can now close all open sub-menus when the user moves the mouse cursor out of the menu.



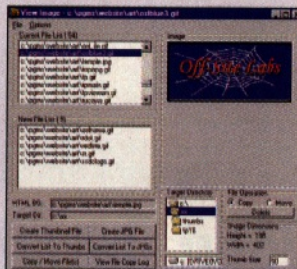
can customise colours and fonts, include fancy mouseover effects, have the menu float over the content of your Web page, and add images to each menu item for both normal and mouseover states. Special effects are a doddle, too, and you can easily have fades and slides improving the look of your menu further still.



Thumb Print Pro

Shareware, 2.80Mb

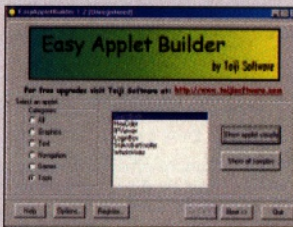
Ever wanted to set up a thumbnail site, but couldn't be bothered with the hassle of fiddling about with the images? Well, this baby lets you create HTML files that display your images as thumbnails, as well as make impressive HTML slide shows, and HTML pages that act as a browsable index for almost any type of media file.



Easy Applet Builder

Shareware, 165Kb

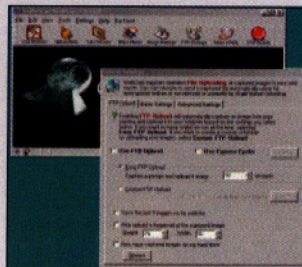
Easy Applet Builder lets you easily and quickly create 38 Java applets to snazz up your Web site, and make it look all the more professional. The applets are fully customisable (you can tinker with fonts and colours), and are divided into five categories. In the graphics section, you can create fades, stars and zooms, whereas the text part allows you to scroll elements of text and include dates. Navigation and tools will have your site looking more professional than you would imagine, but we like the fact that you can create simple games easily for your site.



CoffeeCup WebCam

21-day trial, 2.96Mb

This program gives you everything you need to publish live images and AVI movies on the Web. CoffeeCup WebCam will upload images from any camera to any Web site on your list. It can also make your Web pages, letting you add Cool Live Chat to enable you to chat with your visitors.



CutePage DHTML Menu

30-day trial, 1.61Mb

This lets you create HTML-based dynamic menus without ever turning your hand to a single line of code. You



Complete index of your disc's contents

Full products Cool 3D 2.0 <i>Fully working, 7.52Mb</i> Ulead SmartSaver <i>Fully working, 2.20Mb</i> Bullseye 2 <i>Fully working, 8.09Mb</i> Internet Auctions Auction Manager Pro <i>Freeware, 5.14Mb</i> Auction Assistant Classic <i>30-day trial, 9.69Mb</i> Auction Central <i>Freeware, 1.10Mb</i> Auction Companion <i>Freeware, 5.25Mb</i> Browsing Eudora Pro 4.3.0 <i>Freeware, 7.68Mb</i> Free Agent <i>Freeware, 1Mb</i> Goocy <i>Freeware, 1.2Mb</i>	Go!Zilla <i>Freeware, 1.7Mb</i> ICQ <i>Freeware, 6.1Mb</i> Internet Explorer 5.5 <i>Freeware, 48.8Mb</i> IES Accessories <i>Freeware, 160Kb</i> Jui Search <i>Freeware, 864Kb</i> Netscape Navigator 4.74 <i>Freeware, 20Mb</i> Netscape Navigator 6 Installer <i>Freeware, 224Kb</i> Opera 4.02 <i>30-day trial, 1.81Mb</i> Outlook Express 5 <i>Freeware, part of IES package</i> RealPlayer 8 <i>Freeware, 4.1Mb</i> Sonique 1.51 <i>Freeware, 1.9Mb</i> Shockwave/Flash <i>Freeware, 3.11Mb</i> StayLive 2000 <i>Freeware, 96Kb</i>	WinZip 8 <i>Shareware, 1.2Mb</i> ISPs Madasafish <i>Free Net access, 109.6Mb</i> Net Workshop Anfy <i>Demo, 2.9Mb</i> Canvas 7.0 <i>Demo, 37Mb</i> FileMaker Pro 5.0 <i>Demo, 8.93Mb</i> MSN Messenger 3.0 <i>Freeware, 672Kb</i> PowerNet 2000 <i>Freeware, 608Kb</i> Online Searching Data Grabber <i>Freeware, 1Mb</i> FTP Wolf <i>Freeware, 938Kb</i> Personal Search Agent <i>Freeware, 844Kb</i>	Search It <i>Freeware, 34Kb</i> Search Rocket <i>Freeware, 1.2Mb</i> Site Building Adobe PageMill 3.0 <i>30-day trial, 13Mb</i> Active Shop <i>30-day trial, 350Kb</i> CoffeeCup FTP <i>Freeware, 736Kb</i> CoffeeCup WebCam <i>21-day trial, 3Mb</i> Cute FTP 4 <i>30-day trial, 1.34Mb</i> CutePage DHTML Menu <i>30-day trial, 1.61Mb</i> Easy Applet Builder <i>Shareware, 1.65Mb</i> FinePrint Web <i>Freeware, 1.24Mb</i> GateKeeper 3.2 <i>Freeware, 205Kb</i> GIF Construction Set <i>Shareware, 3.89Mb</i>	GNet Submission <i>Freeware, 3.2Mb</i> HotDog Professional 6.2 <i>30-day trial, 10.6Mb</i> Magic Buttons <i>Freeware, 631Kb</i> Pop-Up <i>Freeware, 661Kb</i> ThumbPrint Pro <i>Shareware, 2.80Mb</i> Software Reviews AtomNet <i>Shareware, 688Kb</i> Internet Explorer 5.5 <i>Freeware, 48.8Mb</i> Lynx <i>Freeware, 740Kb</i> Netscape Navigator 6 Installer <i>Freeware, 224Kb</i> Opera 4.02 <i>30-day trial, 1.81Mb</i> Mac programs Canvas 7 <i>15-day trial, 42.2Mb</i>	Eudora 5 <i>Beta, 3.2Mb</i> AOL Instant Messenger <i>Freeware, 3.2Mb</i> Dreamweaver 3 <i>30-day trial, 10.8Mb</i> Internet Explorer 5.0 <i>Freeware, 11.5Mb</i> Outlook Express 5.0 <i>Freeware 8Mb</i> Alladin Expander 5.5 <i>Freeware, 806Kb</i> Alladin DropStuff <i>Freeware 1.5Mb</i> Download Deputy <i>Shareware, 68Kb</i> Debabilizer Lite LE <i>SE Edition, 562Kb</i> Anarchie 3.7 <i>Freeware, 1.2Mb</i> Madasafish <i>Free Net access</i>
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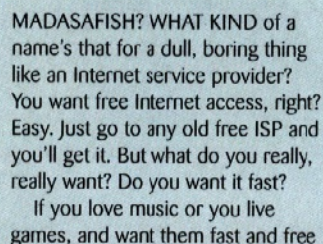
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(www.egasf.com)

Net4Nowt
(www.n4n.co.uk)

Rothwell Town
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The GameRush site gives you hot online games news and top tips – and the games servers have truly awesome ping times.



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- no downtime
- fastest access on the planet
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- unlimited personal Web space
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- free mp3 music and movie previews
- free support
- no subscription charge

plus NEW

- fast, low cost domain name registration
- ADSL – even faster Net access!
- phonemail – access your email by phone
- Webmail – send and receive anywhere

What you get...



1 Now you know it's not like other ISPs. There's no shark practice, just its own slightly irritable mutated sea bass aka Red Dude - so come home to www.madasafish.com.



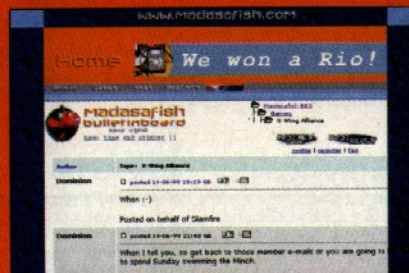
2 Madasafish gives you music with attitude - its M.A.D. Music Automatic Daily mag with news, reviews, charts, gig info, ticket shop, CD shop + loads of FREE MP3 files...at www.madasafish.com.



3 Fastest ping times ever means silky speed for online games (Quake I, II, III, Tribes...) only with GameRush and its super-fast servers... check it out at www.madasafish.com.



4 Madasafish members get as much FREE Web space as they can use, a funky URL - like www.madasafish.com/yourname and it sets up your home page for you! Wanna go unlimited?



5 Come on over to its Mad BBS service, have YOUR say and enjoy the crack on the Web. Members help, chat, special forums on music, games - add your own at www.madasafish.com.



6 Tens of thousands be enough? Check out the wicked Madasafish UseNet service at www.madasafish.com. Come on in the Net's lovely!

Fast service

Madasafish is very, very fast. In simple words you get more out of your Web surfing because it gives you instant access to a lightning fast network. Just try it. It's free, and is very, very fast.

Fast online

Using its CD you can be online in a few minutes. (It's free on the cover of your copy of *Practical Internet*, by the way, in case you hadn't noticed!) Just put it in your CD-ROM drive. Check out the Mad movie. Follow the easy steps. You'll find yourself surfing with the fish double-plus quick.

A wee hint before you sign up: think of your username and password before you start. So, your name is Sarah Bell. (How does it know that? Spooky.) Do you want to be sarahb@madafish.com? Sounds good, doesn't it?

But maybe you want to be stunner@madafish.com (well we think you're lovely anyway). Or you could choose anyone@madafish.com?

Face it - with Madasafish it's going to be funkier than any name@tiredisp.co.uk - and your password can be can be just as funky as you!

You can give the CD to your friends too, and get them online with us. If you need a CD they're free to order - just call 0800 0273 373.

Or... if you already have Internet access, you can sign up online. Just go to www.madasafish.com. Any way that you want it, the sign up is easy, fast, and best of all, free.

Fast, cheap support

And if you need any help, Madasafish is right there. But it won't bust your bank with call charges for support. You know that some 'free' ISPs charge you up to £1 a minute for 'helping' you. Not Madasafish.

The help is cheaper, and better. Call the state-of-the-art Net Centre on 01851 777727 between 8am and 11pm, seven days a week. It faithfully promises that its customer

support agents will help you solve your problem as fast as possible. And all for the cost of a normal rate call.

Instant unlimited Web space

Unlike many other ISPs Madasafish gives you UNLIMITED Web space.

So just what is that? Web space is where you can build your own Web site, and put on the Internet anything you like (well, almost anything...) And because it's a Madasafish virtual place, it can be as big as you like.

Don't know how to build a Web site? It's really pretty easy. For a start, it sets up a home page for you! So if you are "sarahb" - hi Sarah! - your home page address will be www.madasafish.com/sarahb - it really is that easy to get a wicked URL!

You create your very own Web pages on your own computer and then fire them off to Madasafish's computers (the Web space) so that anyone can

find them on the Internet. That's it - easy peasy. Build your own virtual realities, people, with Madasafish you have a cool URL and as much Web space as you can use!

Master the Web

Of course, you'll need software tools. One to create your pages, like FrontPage Express. But don't worry about having to buy a copy, it comes free with the Madasafish CD. And another, like CuteFTP or WSFTP to transfer your Web page files to its computers. Download these programs free from the fast Tucows service - the world's best Internet software resource - at www.madasafish.com. Once you've created the pages on your computer and transferred them to the server, you've published your site. You are your own Webmaster.

Madasafish gives you the free Internet access. It gives you the free unlimited Web space. It gives you the software you need. Go for it!

AOL

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Sales enquiries:	0800 376 7444
URL:	www.aol.co.uk
Monthly rate:	£9.99
Annual rate:	£99.99
Platforms:	Win 95, 98, ME, Mac PPC OS8.6

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• Please note that your CD states a 15-hour free trial but the new offer provides you with an extra 9 hours free online time – giving you a total of 24 hours FREE

Say goodbye to Internet telephone bills with AOL

Sign up to AOL today using the free CD provided and for a limited time only you'll get 24 hours of AOL access, including Internet telephone calls for absolutely nothing.

That's:

- No Internet phone bill
- No subscription charge for one month

After your free trial, AOL's Off Peak All The Time Plan means you don't have to worry about excessive phone charges – there's no more phone bills for Net access with AOL.

Internet calls will never cost more than 1p per minute using AOL's 0800 access number for time spent online. AOL's Off Peak All The Time Plan is just £9.99 per month and your Internet charges are just 1p per minute.

So it doesn't matter when you log on, with AOL it will never cost you more than 1p per minute.

Why choose AOL?

AOL has a wealth of experience in bringing you the best of the Net.

Whether it's from its own entertainment and leisure guides, hand-picked links to the best sites, or the powerful search engine, with AOL you can find all the information you need in one place.

Some of AOL's unique benefits include:

- Easy to use software
- Exclusive AOL Channels
- Free Member Support
- Built in Parental Controls
- Instant Communication Tools
- Worldwide Internet Access
- User – friendly email
- 7 secure, confidential email addresses
- Free Web Space

Exclusive AOL Channels

AOL has something for everyone, no matter what your interests are. At the heart of AOL is the 17 Exclusive Channels that cover everything from Sport to Shopping, Computers to Chat rooms.

AOL's Exclusive Channels contain links to the best and most relevant sites, carefully gathered from the Internet. AOL always includes links to the most relevant Web sites depending on which channel you're in. For example, the Travel Channel has direct links to online travel agents, holiday recommendations,

plus exclusive travel bargains and deals exclusive to AOL members.

AOL for Families

You no longer need to worry about what your kids are accessing on the Internet thanks to AOL's exclusive Parental Controls.

Not only does AOL provide a whole channel devoted to Kids including Games, News and Chat, it also provides you with Parental Controls so that you can set the limits on what your kids can and cannot access.

You decide whether you want your kids to see the special areas for Kid's Only, Young Teens or Mature Teens, or let them access all of the Web – it's completely up to you.

Education and learning on AOL

Not only can you set limits for what your children access, they can benefit from the safe learning environment found on AOL. Homework Help is a designated area for primary and secondary

[Wishful to Reduce or](#)

[REVIEWS](#) [BOOKS](#) [MUSIC](#) [DVD & VIDEO](#) [SOFTWARE](#) [TELEVISION](#)

[BORN TO LOVELY](#) [HOT SEAS](#) [PINK ACCIDENT](#)

SEARCH OUR SHOPS [All Pro](#)

welcome back kids & I know we have [newcomer links](#) for you to link new
Kart, click now)

SIGNUP

- Books
- music
- DVD & Video
- Software
- PC & Video Games
- Auctions
- eRings

OUR OTHER SITES

Kids **under a infant**—spread the American word and use
£100 in gift certificates

american car brings you the [limited-edition Chevy](#). From the
Traditions Memory Music Price, all at \$9.99.

DVD & VIDEO **MY BOOKS**

Crimers of Passion Matt Damon Big Three old: Tirt
know why you always tell the same Matt discover the
you live at the Tabernat ME
Study the same same same [Critic.com](#) the Mch

C. Loyward Kids

ADL Today

News & Weather

Sport

Entertainment

Fantasy

Games

Chat

Internet

Computing

Kids

Learning

Lifestyles

Immores

Local Life

Making

Trend

International

Immora

→ Are WAP phones as good as you expect?

KIDS

Pop Music

News Views

Tell Film

Know Your Swift

Chit Chat

Fun Games

Hi Hi

your friends all over the world at
the cost of just a local call.

AOL has spent time gathering together the best sites on the Internet. Click on Keyword: Internet to see lots of great sites to visit and hints and tips to make the most of your time online. To search for Web pages on your favourite leisure activities, go to AOL Search, which is a "search engine" that will find sites matching your interests.

AOL is one big community and being a member means being a member of one of the world's largest clubs. AOL's Chat Channel welcomes people of all interests, ages and beliefs - from kids, keen gardeners to general all-round motor mouths! Whatever your interest, you'll find others who share your passion on AOL.

hosted chats or create your own personal chat room that you can invite your friends and family to.

Fancy chatting to the stars? AOL Live is the place to go for interactive guests and celebrity interviews. You'll find there are loads of top stars chatting on AOL Live every week.

Only AOL has 250 hosts and guides – a team of trained and dedicated volunteers who offer you help and guidance.

Online shopping is fun, fast, safe and open 24 hours. With AOL, you're provided with exclusive discounts on selected goods as well as a Shopping Help section. Whether you are looking for great bargains for yourself or great gift ideas for someone special, AOL has exclusive deals with well-known retail suppliers like Interflora, Thornton's, ebay, and QXL. AOL members can take advantage of exclusive deals on holidays, CDs, books and much, much more.

ADL Parental Controls Keyword: **PARENTAL CONTROLS**



Parental Controls

GIVING PARENTS PEACE OF MIND

ADL Parental Controls let you protect your children online. Here's how:

- Click Create Screen Names to choose a name for each family member.
- If you've already chosen screen names, click Set Parental Controls to customize each child's access to people and places on AOL and the Internet.



- Getting Started
- Customization Options
- Recommendations
- Report Violations
- Update Safety
- Security Alerts

Never forget an important date with AOL's FREE Gift Reminder service. You'll receive email reminders for each special occasion and event, so you'll never forget an occasion again.

***Your free 24 hours must be used within your first month online**


Keyword: SHOPPING

Great Deals - 24 HOURS A DAY

DEAL OF THE DAY

AOL SHOPPING

DEPARTMENTS

- GIFTS
- AOL SHOP
- BOOKS
- COMPUTING
- CLOTHING
- FOOD & DRINK
- HEALTH & BEAUTY
- HOME & GARDEN
- MUSIC & VIDEO
- ONLINE AUCTIONS
- KIDS, TOYS & BABIES
- TRAVEL SHOP
- SPECIAL OFFERS

AOL RECOMMENDS

- 
[Get bidding!](#)
- 
[Shopping.com](#)
- 
[buy on line at !\[\]\(0a7bfb667d71de0434c5603451c43905_img.jpg\)](#)
- 
[Card](#)
- 
[AOL SHOP](#)
- LAST MINUTE GIFTS**



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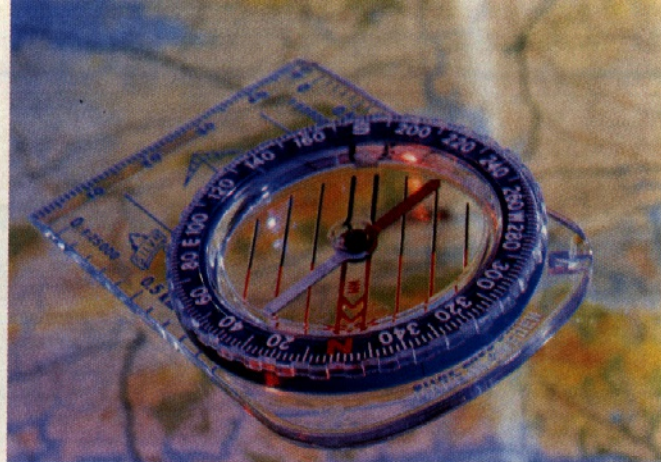
Win £1,500 worth of furniture at [Furniture.com](#)



- 
CONTENTS
- 
HELP
- 
NEWSLETTE
- 
MESSAGES

THE GUIDE

THE BIGGEST AND BEST GUIDE TO INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS, HARDWARE AND WEB SITES



ISP listings

DIRECTORY 120
If you can't decide which free service provider to sign up with, read our guide.

QUICK TESTS 121
Each issue we test a group of different ISPs. This issue, Doodah, DialStart, Velnet, IXUK, BlueCarrot.com, The-whale.com and Freeola.net are tested.

ISP NEWS BYTES 122, 127
Catch up on the latest ISP news.

HEAD-TO-HEAD 125
Sniff Out and IG Click compared.

Buyer's guide

HARDWARE 128
Practical Internet's digest of all the top Internet hardware will help you find the best buys on the market.



0800 FREEPHONE PROVIDERS

WHY SPEND MONEY ON YOUR INTERNET PHONE CALLS WHEN THESE SERVICES OFFER FREEPHONE NET ACCESS?

NAME AND URL	LAUNCH DATE	0800 ACCESS	COST	COMMENTS
0800freedom www.0800freedom.com	2000	24 hour, 7 days a week	n/a	Users will have to display an advertisement banner.
24-7freecall www.24-7freecall.co.uk	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	£19.99	BT customers only. No cut-off period. Initially open to 5,000 users.
Affinity www.affinityuk.com/surfline.htm	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	£25.99	Provides access to a growing list of ISPs using the BT SurfTime package.
AOL www.aol.co.uk	September	24 hour, 7 days a week	£14.99	Further details available nearer launch. Currently in trials with 500 users.
Blueyonder www.blueyonder.co.uk	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	£33	A high-speed cable Internet service from Idewater. A one-off installation fee of £50.
breathe www.breathe.com	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	n/a	£50 one off fee. Has a 6 hour cut-off period.
BTClick www.btclick.com	TBA	24 hour, 7 days a week	TBA	Further details available nearer launch.
BT Internet www.btinternet.com	Now	Evenings and weekends	£9.99	Annual payment option of £109.89 12 months for the price of 11.
CableNet www.cablenet.co.uk	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	n/a	FreeCall Ezesurf: 1 year 0800 access for £39. FreeCall Plus: £235
Calenet www.calenet.co.uk	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	n/a	Lifetime 0800 access - £39. FreeCall Plus for businesses - £235
ClaraNet www.clara.net	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	Various	FreeTime unlimited - unmetered access 6pm-2am weekdays and weekends.
Connect FREE www.connectfree.co.uk	October 1	24 hour, 7 days a week	Various	24/7 option - £24.99 per month. Off-peak option - £9.99 per month
Excite www.excite.co.uk	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	n/a	See TheFreeInternet for details.
Ezesurf www.ezesurf.co.uk	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	n/a	Have to buy a minimum of 60 shares currently valued at £39.
FT Racing www.ft-racing.co.uk	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	n/a	Service to be replaced in September with a metered service.
F9 premier www.f9.co.uk	Now	Weekends	£9.99	Local rate access at other times.
Freechariot www.freechariot.net	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	n/a	After a year the registration fee is refunded to spend on-line.
FREEdial www.purplenet.co.uk	Now	Evenings and weekends	Various	Offers different packages starting at £6.49 + VAT per month.
Freedom2Surf www.freedom2surf.net	Now	Off peak	£9.40	Need to download an application form. Payable by debit or credit card.
FreeISPuk.com www.freeispuk.com	TBA	24 hour, 7 days a week	£15	Pre-registrations are available now and will be given priority.
FreeNet www.freenet.co.uk	TBA	Off-peak	£6.99	Payment by credit card or standing order. Uses BT SurfTime.
FreeServe Time www.freeserve.net	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	n/a	Need to spend a minimum of £10 on national/international calls per month.
FreeServe www.freeserve.net	Now	Evenings and weekends	£5.99	Unlimited off-peak access. Has a two hour cut-off period.
Games-World.net www.games-world.net	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	Various	Uses BT SurfTime. See Intensive Networks for details
icScotland www.icscotland.net	Now	9am - 5pm weekends	n/a	Local rate at other times. Offer ends 31st September. Has a 1-hour cut-off.
IG Click www.igclick.co.uk	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	n/a	One-off registration fee of £50 plus yearly fee of £30

JARGON BUSTER - ISP TERMS EXPLAINED



ISP

ISP stands for Internet service provider. This is the company that gives you access to the Internet.



Kbps

A modem's speed is measured in the number of data 'bits' it transfers per second. The fastest analog modem shifts 56,000 bits per second (56kbps or 56k).



LOG ON/LOG IN

This is the term that's used to describe the process of connecting your computer to a computer network. You log on/log in to the Internet.



NEWSGROUPS

Internet-based message areas or discussion groups, organised by subject hierarchies. Collectively known as Usenet.



POPs

Post Office Protocol. Most popular and flexible system for Internet email. Some free ISPs don't currently offer this, giving you Web-based email instead.



TCP/IP

Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol. These protocols - or ways for two networked devices to talk to one another - drive the Internet.



WEB-BASED EMAIL

A type of service that lets you collect your email messages from a Web site, rather than from your Internet service provider.



WEB SPACE

Web space is basically the 'home' of any Web site you create. Most free ISP accounts give you free Web space on which you can store your Web pages.



NAME AND URL	LAUNCH DATE	2000 ACCESS	COST	COMMENTS
Intensive Networks www3.intensive.net	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	Various	Offers various priced packages using the Surftime offer from BT.
KeConnect www.keconnect.co.uk	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	£29.95	Only available for NTL cable customers. 3-hour disconnect
LibertySurf www.libertysurf.co.uk	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	n/a	An annual fee of £20 for unmetered off-peak access and 1p per minute at other times
MadHouse.net www.madhouse.net	TBA	TBA	TBA	Able to register for further details.
ntworld www.ntworld.com	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	n/a	Free for NTL cable customers as part of TV/phone package.
Telewest SurfUnlimited www.telewest.co.uk	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	£10	Customers will need Telewest line and spend at least £10 a month on voice calls.
TheFreeInternet www.thefreeinternet.net	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	n/a	Costs £50 per year. Has a 1-hour cut-off period.
Tiny Online www.tinyonline.net	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	£25.99	No minimum spend on voice calls. Dialler provided for free.
Totalise www.tinyonline.net	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	n/a	Has a 1 hour cut-off. Not available for business use.
UKRTC www.ukrtc.net	TBA	24 hour, 7 days a week	£19.99	No cut-off period and special rates for 128K access.
Virgin www.virgin.net	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	£15	"To be offered to 10,000 existing Virgin Net subscribers."
Vispac Connect www.vispacconnect.co.uk	TBA	24 hour, 7 days a week	TBA	Further details to be announced nearer launch.
Visual Depth www.visualdepth.com	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	n/a	An annual fee of £74.99 with an initial set-up fee of £24.99
World Online www.worldonline.co.uk	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	n/a	Need to join World Online Telecom. £20 fee and line rental of £14.99 per month.
X-Stream www.x-stream.co.uk	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	n/a	Need to display an advertisement banner. Has a 2 hour cut-off period.
Zoom www.zoom.co.uk	Now	24 hour, 7 days a week	n/a	A one-off fee of £10. Will also need to spend £20 per quarter on shopping online.

FREE ISP DIRECTORY

YOUR AT-A-GLANCE GUIDE TO SUBSCRIPTION-FREE ISPS WHICH CHARGE ONLY FOR LOCAL CALL RATES

NAME AND URL	EMAIL ADDRESSES	WEB SPACE	NEWS GROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS	64k ISDN	128K ISDN
1Jena.com www.1jena.com	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	Local rate	Yes	Yes
4TheNet www.4thenet.co.uk	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	75p	Yes	Yes
4u2give www.4u2give.com	1	None	No	Normal BT rate	Yes	Yes
Abel Gratis www.abelgratis.co.uk	Unlimited	50Mb	Yes	25p	Yes	Yes
Ace Internet www.ace-internet.co.uk	10	5Mb	Yes	National rate	Yes	Yes
Adaption Software www.adaption-software.com/freenet.htm	Unlimited	100Mb	No	25p	Yes	No
Alkazar Internet & Alkazar Home www.alkazar.net	5	Unlimited	Yes	50p	Yes	No
AltaVista Net on Demand www.altavista.co.uk	Unlimited	10Mb	Yes	Local BT rate	Yes	No
Amlink www.amlink.co.uk	Unlimited	250Mb	Yes	Normal BT rate, 75p	Yes	No
Angels www.angels.org.uk	5	10Mb	Yes	--	Yes	No
Anglia TV www.angliatv.co.uk	5	50Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
AngliaNet http://free.angliantel.co.uk	Fee payable	Fee payable	No	Normal BT rate	Yes	No
AppleOnline www.appleonline.net	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	National rate	Yes	Yes
Arcinter.net www.arcinter.net	5	10Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
ArsenalNet www.arsenal.co.uk	5	5Mb	No	50p	Yes	No
Attitudenet www.attitudenet.com	5	10Mb	Yes	75p	Yes	No
Barclays Bank www.isa.barclays.co.uk	5	No	No	National rate	No	No
Barlick.net www.barlick.net	Unlimited	Unlimited	No	75p	Yes	Yes
BarrysWorld www.barrysworld.com	Unlimited	No	Yes	--	Yes	No
BeautyServe www.beautyserve.com	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	Yes
Beebware www.beebware.com	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	National rate	Yes	Yes
BigWig www.bigwig.net	7	15Mb	Yes	£1	Yes	Yes
Biz Online www.bizonline.net	5	5Mb	Yes	Local rate	Yes	No
Blue Carrots www.bluecarrots.com	5	20Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	Yes
Blue Cross Net www.bluecross-free.net	5	10Mb	No	50p	Yes	No
Boots Systems www.boots.com	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	75p	Yes	No
BosInternet www.bosinternet.com	5	No	No	50p	Yes	No
BoyzNow www.boyznow.com	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	National rate	No	No
BreatheNet www.breathe.co.uk/breathenet	5	10Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
Brewworld www.brewworld.net	5	5Mb	Yes	National rate	No	No

FREE ISP >>>>>>>>
QUICK TEST

Doodah

www.doodah.co.uk

ARMED WITH THE zaniest logo you're ever likely to see outside of a *Tiswas* rerun on UK Gold, Doodah is an easy to use ISP aimed at those less experienced members of the Internet set. The sign-up process is nice and easy and there's a fine Kidz section for those weaned on Ant and Dec.



Ease of use

How easy can you make it to join up to an ISP? Probably not much easier than this, so even the youngest of Billie's fans will be able to see their heroine online in minutes. It's very nosy, though, and we were sure we were going to be asked for our inside leg measurement, such was the interrogation.

Tech support

With such an easy-peasy site and more tips than you could shake a *Multicoloured Swap Shop* scarf at, we think there's as much chance of you needing the technical support line as there is of bleary-eyed *EastEnders* Mike Reid returning to the *Runaround* scene. Should you ever have an urgent situation on your hands, though, the staff are as courteous and pleasant as you like.

Features

Not only do you get unlimited free Web space, there's also page design templates and walkthroughs to ensure that your Keith Chegwin site is up and running quicker than his marriage/divorce to Maggie Philbin. A nice touch is the collection of programs to download, and if you're a younger type, the karaoke Britney page is worth a gander.

Overall

If you could never be bothered to learn all about the Net, this should be just up your street, no doubt next door to No. 73. Finding your way around the site is a stroll in the park, and setting up your account and using it as easy as mince pies. It's unlikely you're ever likely to find an ISP as beginner-friendly and pleasant to use as this, so drag yourself away from your Ant and Dec obsession for just a bit, and see just what this wonderful Web thing is all about.

**"Finding your way
round the site is easy"**

FREE ISP QUICK TEST

DialStart

www.dialstart.net

POWERED BY UK Plus, this is another of the new breed of ISPs that looks damn fine, and offers you loads of free goodies. With a portal that you might want to visit more than once, the DialStart service should placate even the most cynical of Web funsters.



Ease of use ★★★★★

We've yet to find a sign-up process that wasn't relatively simple, and this baby doesn't let you down. If you can't be bothered to go through the online signing system, you can order a CD by either phoning the lovely people or just clicking online. Being on one of the cleanest sites you could find, it's not surprising that it's easy to navigate as well.

Tech support ★★★★★

There aren't as many FAQs kicking around here as you'd find elsewhere, so you'll probably find yourself using the 50p a minute technical support line. Although it's pricey, staff seem to be as knowledgeable about Net issues as Bob Monkhouse is on the crazy world of comedy, so they'll be able to sort out most of your gripes.

Features ★★★★★

We wouldn't recommend an 0845 service unless it offered a decent chunk of Web space, and more email accounts than even the increasingly popular Jane McDonald would need. With DialStart, you get 20Mb and unlimited email addresses. We were also highly taken with the home page, which benefits greatly from being clean, yet still offering you enough links and sections to keep you there as long as you need.

Overall ★★★★★

With all your news and sports reports, this is an ISP that has made an effort to keep the punters coming in, time and again. Of course, you've got the obligatory free stuff, but we were drawn more to the strangely Orville-coloured sign-up page, which is inevitably easy to get through. This is a pretty decent ISP, with enough to satiate those 0845 desires for long enough until you can move on up to ADSL.

"Being one of the cleanest sites, it's very easy to navigate"

NAME AND URL	NO. OF EMAILS	WEB SPACE	NEWS GROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS	64k ISDN	128k ISDN
British Library Net www.britishlibrary.net	Unlimited	20Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
BromleyNet www.bromley.net.co.uk	1 + Unlimited Webmail	30Mb	No	-	Yes	Yes
BT Click www.btclick.com	Webmail from Talk21	No	No	50p	Yes	No
Bun www.bun.com	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	50p	No	No
Businessserve www.businessserve.co.uk	5	20Mb	No	Normal BT rate	Yes	No
Buy & Sell Net www.buyandsell.net	Unlimited	20Mb	Yes	50p	No	No
Cable & Wireless Lite www.cwcom.net	5	20Mb	Yes	50p	No	No
CallnetUK www.callnetuk.com	5	20Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	Yes
CanaryConnect www.canaries.co.uk	1	No	Yes	National rate	No	No
Care4free www.care4free.net	5	15Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
Carphone Warehouse www.carphonewarehouse.net	1 Webmail	No	No	50p	Yes	No
CBlue Internet www.cblue.com	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	60p	Yes	No
CharityViree www.charityviree.com	Unlimited	15Mb	Yes	Local rate	No	No
CheapNet www.cheapnet.co.uk	Unlimited	75Mb	Yes	National rate	Yes	No
Citibank www.citibank.com/uk	1 Webmail	No	No	50p	No	No
ClaraNet www.clarinet.co.uk	Unlimited	50Mb	Yes	Local rate	Yes	No
Club 24 Internet www.club24.co.uk	Unlimited	20Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	Yes
Comundo www.comundo.co.uk	Webmail	12 Mb (Tripod)	No	50p	Yes	No
Connect4Free www.connect4free.net	Unlimited	20Mb	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
ConnectFree www.connectfree.net	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	50p	Yes	Yes
ContactBox www.contactbox.co.uk	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	£1	Yes	Yes
ConX www.conx.co.uk	Unlimited	20Mb	Yes	National rate	Yes	Yes
Countdown www.countdownarcade.com	5	25Mb	Yes	Local rate	No	No
CWU Internet www.cwu.org	1 Webmail	No	No	50p	Yes	No
CyberBritain www.cyberbritain.co.uk/join.shtml	5	10Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
Dabsof www.dabsof.co.uk	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	50p	Yes	No
DellNet http://dellnet.excite.co.uk	Webmail	No	No	50p	Yes	No
Derby County Internet www.dcf.co.uk	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	Yes
DerbyshireNet www.derbyshire.net	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
Devilnet UK www.devilnet.co.uk	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	Yes
Dial Start www.dialstart.net	Unlimited	20Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
Dizzi www.dizzi.net	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	25p	Yes	Yes
DK.net www.dknet.co.uk	5	50Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
Doctors.Net www.doctors.net.uk	1	3Mb	No	Local rate	Yes	No
Doodah www.doodah.co.uk	25	Unlimited	Yes	£1	Yes	Yes
EarthLink www.earthlink.co.uk	Unlimited	25Mb	No	75p	Yes	Yes
Ecosse www.ecosse.net	Unlimited	Unlimited	No	Yes	-	Yes

ISP NEWS BYTES

SAVE YOURSELF A MINT WITH AFTER EIGHT

Just when the tales of doom and gloom on the 0800 front were starting to get us down at Practical Internet, along comes ic24 to warm the cockles of our hearts. For a set up charge of nothing, and a monthly fee of zilch, you can get your seedy little hands on free access between 8pm and midnight every weekday. And as if that wasn't enough for absolutely no money, the free package also includes 9am to 5pm 0800 access on Saturday and Sunday. That's 36 free hours a week. What more do you want - someone to dance on top of your desk naked while you browse?



WE HAVE ALL THE TIME IN NTL WORLD

NTL claims that it has now accepted some 190,000 people onto its NTLworld service. While this figure - should it be true, -exceeds the current figures achieved for free access by many other ISPs, most notably AltaVista, this leaves a hefty 150,000 subscribers still hanging on. Theoretically, NTLworld should have cleared up the massive backlog by the time you read this, as the ISP claims it can process 20,000 applications a week. After the whole AltaVista shambles, we'll wait until we see this in action before commenting.

FREE ISP >>>>>>>>
QUICK TEST

www.velnet.com

AS IF THE prospect of standard 0845 Net connection wasn't enough for you to sign up for Velnet, there's free shares in the company for anyone who joins, or refers one of their mates. While this won't turn you into a Patrick Bateman style trader in the city, it's better than a kick in the varbles with a pair of hob-nailed boots.



The sign-up process is surprisingly easy, considering Velnet is setting you on your way to a Robert Maxwell life of insider dealing and the like. Finding your way about the site is simple, although we enjoyed the text that flows along with your mouse movements about as much as watching Mike Yarwood's embarrassing comeback several years ago.

The emphasis is on sorting you out online, which is good considering the 75p a minute helpline. There's a fairly chunky section of FAQs and help pages, which you're asked to look at this before picking up the phone. If you do phone, you'll find your problems melt away, except the problem of having to spend that much money on a phone call in the first place.

Unlimited email. Unlimited Web space. Free shares. What more do you want in life? Having said that, the home page is hardly inspiring, with possibly the most gratuitous shot of Marlon Brando you're ever likely to see. What we found really odd is that you can choose your email address to end with either the standard velnet.com or the rather unnecessary v-sexi.com.

Respectable 0845 ISP, with enough in the way of free stuff to make us want to sign up and keep using the service until we were very rich on the profits of our shares. We were going to mark Velnet down because of the unnecessary horoscopes available on the home page, but we couldn't get the links to work, so all was forgiven.

"Unlimited email. Free shares. What more do you want?"

FREE ISP QUICK TEST

IXUK

www.ixuk.com

BILLED AS THE Internet Exchange for the UK, IXUK comes with all the regalia you would expect to tempt you into its cool and sleek Internet world. With some of the most irrelevant home page links you're likely to see, we just couldn't help but be impressed by the instantaneous connections to THREE EastEnders Webcams.



Ease of use ★★★★★

When you come to sign up, you'll only be asked for the usual information. To make it even easier than a Rangers victory against St Johnstone at fortress Ibrox, all of the sections are split into different pages. While this has the desired effect, it slows everything up slightly. Using the site is nothing short of a joy, with attractive buttons to soothe your Web-weary eyes.

Tech support ★★★★★

IXUK is practically on its knees begging you to never use the helpline, and implore you to instead use the online help pages. But if you have to phone, your 50p a minute should see you sorted out quickly, although it warms our cynical hearts to see people trying to save us money.

Features ★★★★★

We'd be gutted if we couldn't get unlimited email addresses, but only 20Mb of Web space? We know there's as much chance of us using 20Mb as there is of *Blind Date* becoming watchable, but greed dictates that we want loads. We've seen the future, though, and it's in the form of the golden orange buttons floating about the site, and as for the hieroglyphic-style icons - words can't describe how much we love them.

Overall ★★★★★

As witnesses to some of the worst Web sites that exist in the world, it's always good to see one where someone has taken a bit of time to get it looking just right. Quite frankly, though, we wouldn't have cared if the ISP was a big pile of steaming dog poo, but thankfully it wasn't. A decent set of features and enough online help to keep you away from the phone can't be sniffed at either.

"Using the site is nothing short of a joy"

NAME AND URL	NO. OF EMAILS	WEB SPACE	NEWS GROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS	64K ISDN	128K ISDN
Get The Web www.get-the-web.com	Unlimited	100Mb	No	25p	Yes	No
Global Nomad www.globalnomad.co.uk	1	No	No	50p	Yes	No
GoFree www.gofree.co.uk	Unlimited	20Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	Yes
Go-Free www.gofree.to	5	10Mb	No	50p	Yes	No
GoldServe www.goldserve.net	Webmail	No	No	50p	Yes	No
Go-Legend www.go-legend.net	Unlimited	10Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	Yes
Golfzone www.golfzone.co.uk	5	10Mb	Yes	50p	No	No
GoThere Internet www.gothere.co.uk	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	25p	Yes	Yes
GPA.net www.gpanet.co.uk	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	Yes
Greatscape www.greatscape.com	Unlimited	12Mb	Yes	Normal BT rate	Yes	No
G-Wizz www.g-wizz.net	8	10Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
Hairtel www.hairtel.net	Unlimited Webmail	Yes	No		No	No
Handbag.com www.handbag.com	20	None	No	50p	Yes	No
HantsLife www.hantslife.co.uk	Yes	20Mb	No		No	No
HBC21 www.hbc21.com	No	No	No		No	No
HemscotLnet www.hemscot.net	5	20Mb	Yes	Yes	No	
Here.co.uk http://portal.here.co.uk	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	National rate	Yes	Yes
HMV http://hmv.yahoo.co.uk	Unlimited Webmail	No	No	50p	Yes	No
Hotlinks www.hotlinks.co.uk	No	No	No	National rate	Yes	Yes
Hot-Toast www.hot-toast.com	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	50p	Yes	No
i12 www.i12.com	Unlimited	500Mb	Yes	National rate	Yes	Yes
IC24 www.ic24.net	5	10Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
ICLWAY www.iclway.co.uk	5	15Mb	No	Local rate	Yes	No
Icom43 www.icom43.net	Unlimited	15Mb	No	75p	Yes	No
In2Home www.in2home.net/signup	5	15Mb	Yes	60p	Yes	No
Indigo www.indigo.ie	1	5Mb	Yes	58p	Yes	No
iNet Wales www.inet-wales.co.uk	Webmail only	No	No	50p	Yes	Yes
InFinNet www.infinet.co.uk	Unlimited	10Mb	Yes	50p	No	No
Intelynx www.intelynx.net	Unlimited	20Mb	Yes	75p	Yes	Yes
Internet-Today www.internet-today.co.uk	Unlimited	15Mb	Yes	75p	Yes	No
Intu www.intu.co.uk	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	75p	Yes	No
IoFM.net www.iofm.net	Unlimited	Unlimited	No	50p	Yes	Yes
IP Free www.ipfree.co.uk	Unlimited	10Mb	Yes		Yes	Yes
iPrimus www.iprimus.co.uk	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	75p	Yes	No
Islam Direct www.islamdirect.com	5	20Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	Yes
IXUK www.ixuk.com	Unlimited	20Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	Yes
jolt www.jolt.co.uk	Unlimited	Unlimited	No		Yes	No
JungleLink www.junglelink.net	Unlimited	10Mb	Yes	50p	No	No
Kelly Internet Services www.kn1.com	No	No	No	Normal BT rate	Yes	Yes
Kickon www.kickon.com	10	15Mb	No	60p	No	No
Kirion www.kirion.com	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	75p	Yes	Yes
Knowall www.knowall.co.uk	?	10Mb	No	?	No	No
KZuknet www.kzuk.net	Unlimited	Unlimited	No	50p	No	No
Lancashire Enterprise Directory www.led.mcmillan.com	No	No	No		Yes	Yes
Learnfree www.learnfree.co.uk	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	50p	No	No
Liberate www.liberate.co.uk	Unlimited	10Mb	No	Normal BT rate	Yes	No
LibertySurf www.libertysurf.co.uk	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
Lifestyle www.lifestyle.co.uk	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	75p	Yes	Yes
LineOne www.lineone.net	5	50Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	Yes
Loyal Mail www.loyalmail.co.uk	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	Free	Yes	No
Madasafish www.madasafish.com	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Normal BT rate	Yes	No

NAME AND URL	NO. OF EMAILS	WEB SPACE	NEWS GROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS	64K ISDN	128K ISDN
Madhouse Net www.madhouse.net.co.uk	5	25Mb	Yes	Local rate	Yes	Yes
ManUFree.net www.manutd.com/manufreenet	5	20Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
Max2 www.max2.co.uk	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	£1	Yes	Yes
Mersinet www.mersinet.co.uk	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	25p	Yes	Yes
Messages www.messages.co.uk	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	-	Yes	No
Millionserve www.millionserve.net	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	75p	Yes	Yes
Ministry of Sound www.ministryofsound.net	Unlimited	20Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
Mixx www.mixx.co.uk	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	75p	Yes	Yes
MSN FreeWeb www.msnfreeweb.co.uk	Webmail	No	No	National rate	No	No
MT Click www.mtclick.com	Webmail	No	No	-	Yes	No
MusicFan www.musicfan.co.uk	1	30Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
MWfree.net www.mwfree.net	Unlimited	20Mb	Yes	50p	No	No
My ISP www.myisp.co.uk	Unlimited	20Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
NASCR www.nascr.net	Unlimited	20Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
Nationwide www.nationwide.co.uk	5	10Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
Natwest.com www.natwest.com	Webmail	No	No	50p	Yes	No
Nebular Internet www.nebular.co.uk	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	Local rate	Yes	Yes
Net4Zero (Top Car) www.net4zero.com	Unlimited	15Mb	Yes	Local rate	No	No
NetDirect Online www.instantndo.com	Unlimited	20Mb	Yes	National rate	Yes	Yes
Netgames UK www.netgames.org.uk	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	National rate	Yes	No
Netrider www.netrider.co.uk	5	10Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
Netscape Online www.netscapeonline.co.uk	Unlimited	20Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
netSimple www.netsimple.co.uk	Unlimited	Negotiable	Yes	Mobile phone rate	Yes	No
Newport RFC www.newport-rfc.co.uk	Unlimited	20Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
NextCall.net www.nextcal.net	5	15Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
NHS People www.nhspeople.net	5	15Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
Nireland.net www.nireland.net	3	10Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
NME.com www.nme.com	Unlimited	Webmail	No	National rate	Yes	No
Nofee www.nofee.co.uk	Unlimited	Webmail	No	National rate	Yes	No
Nownet www.nownet.co.uk	5	15Mb	Yes	?	No	No
NTL World www.ntlworld.com	5	10Mb	Yes	£1	No	No
Oceanfree www2.oceanfree.net	Unlimited	No	No	£1	Yes	No
Oik www.oik.co.uk	5	No	Yes	£1	Yes	Yes
Onet www.onet.co.uk	Unlimited	30Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
Online-Direct www.online-direct.net	Unlimited	20Mb	No	-	Yes	Yes
Orange.net www.orange.net	1	15Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No

FREE ISP >>>>>>>> **QUICK TEST**

BlueCarrots.com

www.bluecarrots.com

TIRED OF PLOUGHING your money into Internet calls, furthering BT's profit margins and giving your ISP a tidy sum too? Joining BlueCarrots.com gives you 1,000 shares in the company, as well as a CarrotMail address that saves you vast wads of cash on online purchases. Sounds good to us.



Ease of use ★ ★ ★

We encountered a couple of problems in signing up, namely the first username we tried was taken. When we tried a second time, BlueCarrot informed us we had already registered. This meant we had registered with a name that made it impossible to log in. Needless to say, we found this none to useful.

Tech support ★★★★★

There are about three million tutorials and FAQs on the site. Okay, a slight exaggeration, but the fact remains that every effort has been made to save you picking up that phone and communicating with someone. So unless you need to spend 50p a minute on a surrogate friend, this should be fine.

Features ★★★★★

You've got your thousand free shares, your hefty shopping discounts, so all you can moan about now is how much email and Web space you've got to jigger about with. Well, curb those complaining tendencies for just a bit longer, for you've got 20Mb of Web space to fill with all manner of your favourite things. All right, you only get five Web-based email accounts, but that's just a minor triviality in our eyes.

Overall ★★★★★

If there's one thing we like at *Practical Internet*, it's being given things for nothing. That's why we like BlueCarrots.com. While there are a few ISPs that can better the bogstandard services you get elsewhere, it's the lure of the free shares and stuff that we think will tempt people. In fact, the only freebie that's missing from our ideal list is the signed copy of seminal Altered Images album *Pinky Blue*, but maybe we're hoping for a bit too much.

**"Joining BlueCarrots.com
gives you 1000 shares
in the company"**

HEAD TO HEAD

SMELL OUT VS IG CLICK

TWO FREEPHONE ISP'S COMPARED

Sniff Out		IG Click
www.sniffout.net	URL	www.igclick.co.uk
No	Is there a set up charge?	£50
£24.99	Monthly charges?	A yearly charge of £30
	All the time	When do you get free access?
Yes	Are Macs supported?	All the time
Unlimited	Number of POP3 email accounts?	Yes
Unlimited	Amount of free Web space?	Unlimited
None	What is the cut-off time?	None
		

FREE ISP

QUICK TEST

The-whale.com

www.the-whale.com

IF YOUR YOUTH was as sad as ours, you'll have spent your adolescent evenings in the company of James Whale. The original UK shock jock, James Whale developed the idea of showing a live radio show on the telly. The Leeds loony was a pioneer of the madcap phone-in and we were delighted when we found out he had his own ISP.



Ease of use

★★★★

We kind of hoped for a nasty and agitated sign-up process, in keeping with the great man himself, but everything was really easy. We're never keen on the home page and the portal being on different pages, but it seems to work okay here, with all of your James-obsessed material kept on the home page.

Tech support

★★★★

This is a good old-fashioned ISP, where if you've got a problem, you either sort it out on your own, or get on the blower for some technical support and advice. Imagine our disappointment when James Whale didn't answer the phone, though, and we had to speak to a normal person instead. Worse was to follow when we weren't cut off amid a barrage of insults, and were actually helped by a very pleasant human being.

Features

★★★★★

For a James Whale enthusiast, the home page is a veritable feast. Live Web cams, live radio shows, outtakes, his best moments, cartoons of the great broadcaster himself, and all manner of other goodies will have you coming back time and again. And if you're one of those Web geeks, you can take advantage of the five free emails and 20Mb of free Web space.

Overall

★★★★

If you've never been a fan of James Whale, or have never even heard of the broadcasting genius, we couldn't really imagine that this ISP would impress you too much. If, like us, Friday night in the late Eighties meant a crazy mix of mirth, mayhem and misanthropy live from Leeds, then you really should check this out.

"For a James Whale enthusiast, the home page is a treat"

NAME AND URL	NO. OF EMAILS	WEB SPACE	NEWS GROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS	64K ISDN	128K ISDN
Phones4u www.4unet.co.uk	5	20Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
Photoshot www.photoshot.com	5	15Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
POBox www.pobox.co.uk	1	None	No	-	Yes	No
Prontoserve www.prontoserve.net	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	Yes
PublicOnline www.publiconline.net	5	5Mb	Yes	Local rate	Yes	No
Quista www.rbos.co.uk/quista	5	10Mb	Yes	-	Yes	No
Rapidial www.rapidial.co.uk	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	Yes
Route56 www.route56.co.uk	Unlimited	5Mb	Yes	Normal BT rate	Yes	Yes
RugbyWeb www.rugbyweb.co.uk	Unlimited	20Mb	Yes	50p	No	No
RYA On-Line www.rya-online.net	Unlimited	10Mb	No	50p	Yes	No
SAFC.net www.sunderland-afc.com	Unlimited	15Mb	Yes	£1	No	No
Sage Internet www.sage.com	Unlimited	15Mb	Yes	Normal BT rate	Yes	No
Sainsbury.net www.sainsbury.co.uk/lineone	5	50Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
Scannet www.scannet.co.uk	3	5Mb	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
Scarlets www.scarlets.co.uk	Unlimited	20Mb	Yes	50p	No	No
SchoolVire www.schoolvire.com	Unlimited	15Mb	Yes	Local rate	No	No
Scotfree-UK www.scotfree-uk.net	5	25Mb	Yes	60p	Yes	Yes
Sheetmetal.com www.sheetmetal.com	Webmail	None	No	Normal BT rate	No	No
Shetland Internet www.shetland.co.uk	Unlimited	Unlimited	No	-	Yes	Yes
SimNet www.simnet.co.uk/iree.html	1	Fee payable	Yes	-	Yes	No
Skynow www.skynow.co.uk	5	25Mb	Yes	25p	Yes	Yes
Smartone www.smartone.co.uk	1	20Mb	Yes	27p/peak 18p/off-peak	Yes	No
Sniff Out www.sniffout.net	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	Local BT rate	Yes	Yes
SoNow www.sonow.net	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	50p	No	No
South West Net www.swest.co.uk	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	National rate	Yes	No
Sparticus.net www.sparticus.net	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	60p	Yes	Yes
Sprintnet www.sprintnet.co.uk	Unlimited	5Mb	No	-	Yes	Yes
StayFree www.stayfree.co.uk	Unlimited	5Mb	Yes	Normal BT rate	Yes	Yes
StormNet www.storm-online.com	5	50Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	Yes
StrayDuck www.strayduck.com	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	60p	Yes	Yes
Student World www.student-world.co.uk	Unlimited	10Mb	Yes	60p	No	No
StudentUK www.studentuk.net	5	15Mb	Yes	50p	No	No
Supanet www.supanet.com	Unlimited	20Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
Surf&Save www.surfandsave.co.uk	5	10Mb	Yes	50p	No	No
Surf3 www.surf3.net	Unlimited	15Mb	Yes	75p	Yes	Yes
SurfLondon www.surfondon.co.uk	1	No	No	-	No	No
SurfFree www.surf-free.co.uk	1	15Mb	No	Normal BT rate	No	No
Tellico www.tellico.co.uk	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	£1	Yes	Yes
Tellnet www.tellnet.co.uk	Unlimited	25Mb	Yes	Local rate	Yes	Yes
Teqnet www.teqnet.net	Unlimited	20Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	Yes
TescoNet www.tesco.net	5	10Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	No
The Hornets www.thehornets.net	6	20Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	Yes
The Link www.thelink.co.uk	No	No	No	-	No	No
The Mail www.themail.co.uk	1	50Mb	Yes	60p	No	No
TheFreeInternet www.thefreeinternet.net	Unlimited	5Mb	Yes	£1	Yes	No
Thermutual.net www.thermutual.net	5	25Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	Yes
The-Whale.com www.the-whale.com	5	10Mb	Yes	50p	Yes	Yes
Totalise www.totalise.net	Unlimited	20Mb	Yes	Free	Yes	Yes
Totalserve www.totalserve.co.uk	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	50p	Yes	Yes
UK Business Internet www.ukbusinessinternet.co.uk	Unlimited	50Mb	Yes	25p	Yes	Yes
UK Fantastic www.ukfantastic.net	Unlimited	20Mb	Yes	75p	Yes	Yes

PAY ISPs

NAME AND URL	NO. OF EMAILS	WEB SPACE	COST (P/M)	SUPPORT COSTS	64K ISDN	128K ISDN
AOL www.aol.co.uk	7	10Mb	£9.99	Free	No	No
BT Internet www.btiInternet.com	5	10Mb	£9.99	50p	Yes	Yes
Cablenet www.cablenet.net	Unlimited	50Mb	From £4.95	Normal BT rate	Yes	No
CIX www.cix.co.uk	Unlimited	5Mb	From £6.25	Local rate	Yes	Yes
CompuServe www.compuserve.co.uk	7	10Mb	£7.50	National rate	No	No
Demon www.demon.net	Unlimited	20Mb	£11.75	Local rate	Yes	Yes
DirectConnection www.dircon.net	Unlimited	20Mb	From £4.70	Local rate	Yes	Yes
Easynet www.easynet.co.uk	Unlimited	Unlimited	£11.99	Local rate	No	No
Entanet www.entanet.net	Unlimited	20Mb	£59 per year	National rate	Yes	Yes
KingstonInternet www.kingston-internet.net	Unlimited	20Mb	From £5	Normal BT rate	Yes	No
Netkonec www.netkonec.net	Unlimited	Unlimited	From £199	National rate	No	No
PIPEX www.dial.pipex.com	5	50Mb	£15	National rate	No	No
Which? Online www.which.net	5	5Mb	£7.75	£1	No	No

Apologies to free ISP Abel Gratis (www.ablegratis.co.uk) which was tested in August's *Practical Internet*. All subscribers receive 50Mb of free Web space, not 10Mb per alias as stated. A portal is available at <http://home.ablegratis.co.uk> and this runs in conjunction with a home page at www.ablegratis.co.uk. Based on these amendments, *Practical Internet* has increased the overall Quick Test score to 3/5 and apologises to Abel for these inaccuracies.

Freeola.net

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Practical Internet

Practical Internet

"This is one of the most fully-featured ISPs you're likely to find"



Buyer's Guide

DON'T BUY A COMPUTER AND LET IT GATHER DUST ON YOUR DESK.
IMPROVE YOUR INTERNET EXPERIENCE WITH THESE GREAT ADD-ONS

BUYING NEW HARDWARE and software for your PC or Mac can be a tricky task. You often have to choose between products which cost the same price and offer identical features. What's more, high street shops often encourage you to buy the most expensive products – even though they may be unsuitable for you.

This is why we've compiled the Buyer's Guide. It's been written especially with Net users in mind, and features products, all organised by type, that enhance your Web surfing experience.

The kinds of products we look at include external modems, Webcams, WYSIWYG designers,

graphics packages, and software and hardware MP3 players. Since we've rigorously tested every product we can tell you each one's plus and minus points.

We've published more detailed reports on these products in the past, so if you want more information about any one, take a note of the issue number shown at the top of each section, then turn to page 144 or call 01202 200 200 to order a back copy.

The information here is updated every month. Please note, however, that the prices shown are guide ones provided by the manufacturers, so shop around to find the very best deal.



WEBCAMS (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 34)



Zoom Webcam ISA

Price	£50
Contact	0870 720 0060 www.zoomtel.com
What's good?	A value-for-money Webcam that handles resolutions up to YHS standard 352x288.
What's bad?	Webcam ISA uses an archaic card interface rather than USB, so it's a struggle to install.
Overall	★★★



Logitech QuickCam Pro

Price	£100
Contact	01306 734300 www.logitech.com
What's good?	The QuickCam Pro is easy to use, captures high resolution video and has great software.
What's bad?	Video blurs at high resolutions and £100 is pretty expensive for what you get.
Overall	★★★★



Creative Labs VideoBlaster Webcam III

Price	£70
Contact	01245 265265 www.soundblaster.com
What's good?	The VideoBlaster Webcam captures high-resolution video and is packed with features.
What's bad?	The simple electronic zoom is a bit wobbly, and prone to irrational behaviour.
Overall	★★★★



Philips PCA646VC

Price	£70
Contact	0181 689 4444 www.philips.com
What's good?	A superb quality, easy-to-use Webcam, which produces quality video and still images.
What's bad?	The rubber tripod the camera sits on makes orientation tricky.
Overall	★★★★★



Videologic HomeC@m

Price	£70
Contact	01943 277488 www.videologic.com
What's good?	Great resolution, simple installation and a good selection of software.
What's bad?	The camera is noisy, and you need at least a Pentium 200Mhz for it to work comfortably.
Overall	★★★★

EXTERNAL MODEMS (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 35)



Diamond Supra Express 56k Pro

Price	£59
Contact	01189 444400 www.diamondmm.co.uk
What's good?	Super modem – easy to install. Uses Shotgun technology, giving much faster connections.
What's bad?	There's little we could find wrong, except the lack of 25-pin COM port connector cables.
Overall	★★★★★



Elsa Microlink 56k Internet

Price	£60
Contact	08000 563445 www.elsa.com
What's good?	The Microlink 56k supports V.90 and K56flex formats, and has a natty answerphone facility.
What's bad?	The documentation, especially the instruction manual, is poor.
Overall	★★★★★



3Com / US Robotics 56k

Price	£100
Contact	0800 731 1064 www.3com.co.uk
What's good?	A basic, no-nonsense modem that achieves good speeds in V.90 mode.
What's bad?	Compared with other, similar spec modems, it proves quite expensive.
Overall	★★★



Zoom 2987U Faxmodem 56K USB

Price	£70
Contact	0870 720 0060 www.zoom.com
What's good?	A good value USB modem that performs well under rigorous connection tests.
What's bad?	The initial installation is slow and over-complex.
Overall	★★★★



Accura 56k Speakerphone

Price	£99.95
Contact	0870 720 0060 www.hayes.co.uk
What's good?	A reasonable modem that doubles up as a fax machine and speakerphone.
What's bad?	Doesn't install easily on Windows 98, and is far more expensive than similar-spec models.
Overall	★★★★

KEYBOARDS (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 36)



IBM Rapid Access II

Price	£29.38
Contact	0870 0102512 www.pc.ibm.com/uk
What's good?	Designed for maximum typing comfort, with five customisable 'hot key' buttons.
What's bad?	You can only customise a handful of hotkeys.
Overall	★★★★



Logitech Cordless Desktop Deluxe

Price	£79.99
Contact	01753 870900 www.logitech.com/uk
What's good?	A cordless keyboard and mouse combination so you can work away from your PC.
What's bad?	It's a bit expensive. Do you know anyone who'd spend almost 80 notes on a keyboard?
Overall	★★★★



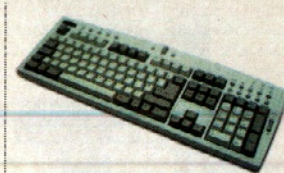
Logitech Deluxe

Price	£14.99
Contact	01753 870900 www.logitech.com/uk
What's good?	Typing is comfortable, and while there are a bunch of customisable 'hot keys'.
What's bad?	There aren't many features on offer, and we found the keys to be 'wobbly' on occasions.
Overall	★★★



Chicony KB-2971

Price	£15
Contact	www.chicony.com
What's good?	The KB-2971 is great to use, and the keys are weighted perfectly.
What's bad?	There are no fancy extras, and the lack of a palm rest is a concern.
Overall	★★★★



Belkin Multimedia keyboard

Price	£24.99
Contact	01635 573600 www.belkin.com
What's good?	Has tons of extra buttons for Web operations and multimedia applications.
What's bad?	The software is poor, while the keys are flimsy and the palm rest detaches itself.
Overall	★★★

MP3 PLAYERS (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 37)



Diamond Rio 500

Price	From £162
Contact	01189 444400 www.diamondmin.co.uk
What's good?	Elegant and powerful, the Diamond comes equipped with 64Mb memory.
What's bad?	The price. The same money will buy you a portable MiniDisc deck.
Overall	★★★★



LG MF-PD330

Price	£130
Contact	0181 202 1919 www.lge.co.uk
What's good?	The LG has a remote control unit comes supplied with two 16 Mb memory cards.
What's bad?	The software is basic and only deals with the transfer of MP3 files with a printer port cable.
Overall	★★★★



Philex Mpress3

Price	£150
Contact	0181 202 1919 www.philex.com
What's good?	Can record via a built-in microphone and downloads MP3 files quickly.
What's bad?	There's really not a lot to it and it could be cheaper priced.
Overall	★★★★



Saehan MP-F20

Price	£100
Contact	01234 344206 www.mp-man.co.uk
What's good?	The original MP3 player holds its own and can contain data other than MP3 files.
What's bad?	File transfer is slow and the lack of features shows the player's age.
Overall	★★★★



Pine D-Music

Price	£129
Contact	01908 218812 www.pine-dmusic.com
What's good?	There are plenty of features and the display on the player is good.
What's bad?	Painfully slow transfer of files and voice recording is decidedly low-fi.
Overall	★★★★

MICE (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 38)



Microsoft Intellimouse Explorer

Price	£50
Contact	0345 000 2000 www.microsoft.com
What's good?	What isn't it? A great Net-savvy mouse which uses optical sensors instead of a ball.
What's bad?	The elegant right handed design is unsuitable for left-handed people.
Overall	★★★★



Kensington Webcracer

Price	£50
Contact	0800 252 359 www.kensington.com
What's good?	The touchpad-driven device is great for everyday Web use and writing email.
What's bad?	It's quite big and chunky, and is less useful for word processing and general office work.
Overall	★★★★



Logic 3 Scroll Mouse

Price	£12.99
Contact	0208 902 2211 www.spectravideo.co.uk
What's good?	A simple mouse that can be configured for left- or right-handed use.
What's bad?	Even though the Scroll Mouse uses USB, it isn't Mac compatible.
Overall	★★★★



Logitech Cordless MouseMan Wheel

Price	£50
Contact	01306 734400 www.logitech.com
What's good?	An excellent cordless mouse which can be easily reconfigured.
What's bad?	The PC-only MouseMan Wheel isn't the cheapest mouse around.
Overall	★★★★



Lindy 4D Internet Mouse

Price	£13
Contact	n/a www.lindy.co.uk
What's good?	The 4D Mouse features two scroll wheels compared to the usual one.
What's bad?	The mouse feels flimsy. The USB drivers are PC only, so it won't work with your iMac.
Overall	★★★★

MULTIMEDIA PC SPEAKERS (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 39)



Altec Lansing ADA880

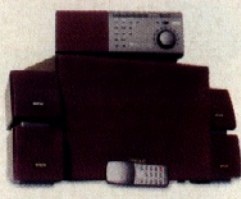
Price
£200

Contact
0208 847 9478 www.alteclansing.com

What's good?
The ADA880 packs a hefty bass punch, and the overall sound is rich and sonorous.

What's bad?
Unfortunately, there's no dedicated centre surround sound speaker.

Overall ★★★★★



Teac PowerMax 2000

Price
£223

Contact
020 8498 2100 www.simply.co.uk

What's good?
A good surround sound setup, with a dedicated centre speaker, and control panel.

What's bad?
Bass is hollow-sounding, and the centre-speaker control panel is over-complicated.

Overall ★★★★★



Videologic Sirocco Spirit

Price
£140

Contact
01943 260511 www.videologic.com

What's good?
The Sirocco Spirit speakers have an excellent sound quality and look like the mutt's nuts.

What's bad?
The bass reproduction can be poor, and the volume control at the back is annoying.

Overall ★★★★★



Logitech Soundman X2

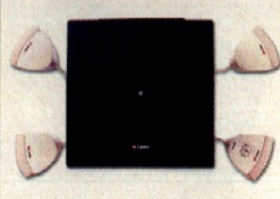
Price
£49.99

Contact
01753 870900 www.logitech.com

What's good?
A fairly basic, no-nonsense multimedia PC speaker system, with reasonable sound.

What's bad?
Compared to other speakers we've tested, the Soundman X2 set up is pretty ordinary.

Overall ★★★



Labtec LCS-2514

Price
£59.99

Contact
01256 386000 www.labtec.com

What's good?
With decent sound quality at a bargain price, these support sound cards with four-channels.

What's bad?
Features are paltry, and the sound has a tendency to distort at high levels.

Overall ★★★★★

SCANNERS (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 40)



Microtek ScanMaker 3600

Price
£81.08

Contact
01782 753300 www.microtek.nl

What's good?
Excellent value for money, easy to set up and good for first time buyers.

What's bad?
There's no 'descreen' mode for producing clean scans from printed material.

Overall ★★★★★



AgfaSnapscan Touch

Price
£99

Contact
0208 231 4903 www.agfa.co.uk

What's good?
Installation is straightforward and 'descreening' is automatic.

What's bad?
The PhotoGenie control has a tendency to over-expose pictures.

Overall ★★★★★



Canon FB630u

Price
£116

Contact
0121 680 8062 www.canon.co.uk

What's good?
The Canon is nice and compact and works on both Mac and PC.

What's bad?
There's very little wrong with this, although it could be a bit cheaper.

Overall ★★★★★



HP ScanJet 5300C

Price
£129

Contact
01344 360000 www.hp.com

What's good?
Colour reproduction, contrast range and captured detail are all impressive.

What's bad?
Little manual control offered and it's not the best value on the market.

Overall ★★★★★



Epson Perfecto 610

Price
£119

Contact
0800 220546 www.epson.co.uk

What's good?
Connectivity is impressive and the ScanJet has number of user-definable buttons.

What's bad?
Not the most flexible of machines considering the price tag.

Overall ★★★★★

PCMCIA MODEMS (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 41)



Zoom PC Card 56k Dual Mode

Price
£79.99

Contact
0870 720 0060 www.zoom.com

What's good?
The cheapest modem on test, and the most reliable and easiest to install.

What's bad?
Supplied software is for Windows only.

Overall ★★★★★



Eicon Diva Mobile V.90 Card

Price
£229

Contact
0208 967 8080 www.eicom.com

What's good?
The Eicon provides impressive performance and boasts an ISDN 2 terminal adaptor.

What's bad?
It's an expensive luxury.

Overall ★★★★★



Xircom RealPort 56 Card

Price
£141

Contact
01256 332552 www.xircom.com

What's good?
It's neither cheap nor expensive, so the Xircom is a middle-of-the-range modem.

What's bad?
Very lacklustre in performance and the speaker appeared to be faulty.

Overall ★★★



Psion Dacom Gold Card Global 56k

Price
£199

Contact
01908 261 686 www.psiondacom.com

What's good?
The Dacom is very user friendly and easy to install.

What's bad?
Not great value for money and refused to connect to one of our test ISPs at V.90.

Overall ★★★★★



Hayes Optima V.90

Price
£209

Contact
0870 720 0060 www.hayes.co.uk

What's good?
Plenty of features and easy to install. The Optima provided reasonable speeds.

What's bad?
Didn't integrate well with all ISPs and expensive for what you get.

Overall ★★★

CD WRITERS (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 42)


Memorex CDRW-6424

Price
£199
Contact
0208 990 6600 www.memorexlive.com
What's good?
Fast for a recordable drive, supports packet writing and features CD-text.
What's bad?
The supplied software is an older version of Adaptec's Easy CD Creator.
Overall ★★ ★★


Philips PCRW404K

Price
£151.58
Contact
0208 689 4444 www.pcstuff.philips.com
What's good?
A stylish drive, easy to install and very user-friendly, bundled with easy to use software.
What's bad?
Not the fastest drive on the market with a modest 4x speed, CD-Text isn't supported either.
Overall ★★ ★★


HP CD-Writer Plus 9310I

Price
£189
Contact
01344 360000 www.hp.com
What's good?
Burns CD-Rs at a lightning quick 10x speed and CD-RWs at 4x speed.
What's bad?
The supplied software is an older version, but little else to complain about.
Overall ★★ ★★ ★★


Iomega ZipCD 650

Price
£229
Contact
0207 365 9527 www.iomega-europe.com
What's good?
The nicest drive has a USB interface that allows easy connection to either a PC or Mac.
What's bad?
Among the slowest writers tested, the ZipCD doesn't support packet writing or CD-Text.
Overall ★★ ★★


Creative Labs CD-Studio

Price
£179
Contact
01189 344744 www.europe.creative.co.uk
What's good?
A fast drive with excellent audio capabilities comes bundled with excellent software.
What's bad?
The CD-Rom drive speed is slow and doesn't yet support Easy CD Creator.
Overall ★★ ★★

DIGITAL CAMERAS (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 43)


Premier Electronics MDC-800

Price
£264.38
Contact
01992 634 652 www.premierelect.co.uk
What's good?
Good value and produces perfectly acceptable pictures for email attachments or Web pages.
What's bad?
Cheap and tacky to look at this camera has a fixed lens and no Zoom.
Overall ★★ ★★


Agfa CL18

Price
£119
Contact
0208 231 4903 www.agfa.co.uk
What's good?
Compact and cheap, this camera is very Internet friendly.
What's bad?
There's no macro or zoom lens and the memory supplied is pretty low.
Overall ★★ ★★ ★★


Kodak DC215 Zoom

Price
£249.99
Contact
0870 430270 www.kodak.co.uk
What's good?
The DC215 offers high resolution pictures and also comes with a 2x optical zoom lens.
What's bad?
The serial port connection is painfully slow compared with the other cameras.
Overall ★★ ★★ ★★


Epson PhotoPC 650

Price
£191
Contact
0800 220 546 www.epson.co.uk
What's good?
There's a sizeable 8Mb memory card that will accommodate 88 640x480 pictures.
What's bad?
There's no USB port and the 650m isn't the most elegant camera tested.
Overall ★★ ★★ ★★

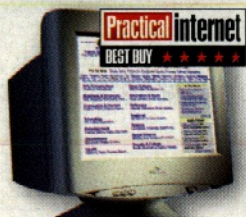

Canon Powershot S10

Price
£600
Contact
0121 680 8062 www.canon.co.uk
What's good?
The best pictures by far from the most expensive camera tested at 2.1 megapixels.
What's bad?
Incredibly no USB port for such an expensive model.
Overall ★★ ★★ ★★

MONITORS (REVIEWED IN THIS ISSUE)


CTX VL710T

Price
£193.88
Contact
01943 810800 www.ctxeurope.com
What's good?
A well priced monitor with no onscreen flicker. It benefits from a fairly flat screen.
What's bad?
It has few connections and no USB hub that's featured on pricier models.
Overall ★★ ★★


ADI MicroScan

Price
£269.08
Contact
020 8327 1900 www.adieurope.com
What's good?
A pleasantly-styled monitor with a built-in microphone. It has a four-port USB hub.
What's bad?
Expensive – but that's the price of buying a top quality monitor.
Overall ★★ ★★ ★★


Iiyama A705MT

Price
£245.56
Contact
01438 745482 www.iiyama.co.uk
What's good?
You get the option of buying a monitor stand that incorporates a USB hub.
What's bad?
Features are thin on the ground and the user interface is not very 'friendly'.
Overall ★★ ★★


Sony E200

Price
£276.13
Contact
0990 424424 www.sony-europe.com
What's good?
This monitor boasts a 17-inch flat screen tube and very easy-to-use onscreen menus.
What's bad?
No microphones and no hubs. The screen refresh rate at max res is a flickery 65Hz.
Overall ★★ ★★


Philips 107B

Price
£276.13
Contact
0208 689 4444 www.pcstuff.philips.com
What's good?
A compact 17in monitor, you can alter the screen settings from Windows.
What's bad?
The screen is not completely flat and thus some errors are introduced. It's also pricey.
Overall ★★ ★★



WEB SITE DESIGN PACKAGES (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 37)



HotMetal Pro

Price	£99
Contact	020 8387 4110 www.hotmetalpro.com
What's good?	With a host of extras at your disposal, HotMetal Pro uses drag and drop at its best.
What's bad?	Not as slick as some of the expensive big
Overall	★★★★

Adobe GoLive 4.0

Adobe GoLive 4

Price	£229
Contact	020 8606 4000 www.adobe.co.uk
What's good?	A superb page designer with an easy to use interface. One of the best.
What's bad?	A bit on the expensive side, really. Apart from that, nothing whatsoever.
Overall	★★★★



FrontPage 2000

Price	£113
Contact	0345 002000 www.microsoft.com
What's good?	Based on the well-known Office 2000 interface. Great tool for creating Web sites.
What's bad?	The standard Office 2000 problems – half hidden, expanding menus.
Overall	★★★



DreamWeaver 3

Price	£299
Contact	020 8358 5857 www.macromedia.com
What's good?	Just about the industry standard WYSIWYG package at the moment. Great.
What's bad?	Not what you'd call cheap. A bit daunting for the beginner.
Overall	★★★★



NetObjects Fusion 5

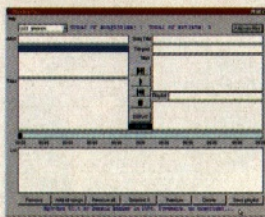
Price	£205 + VAT
Contact	0800 0289851 www.netobjects.co.uk
What's good?	Tries to get your business online quickly and easily. Copes with advanced features.
What's bad?	Doesn't let you edit HTML. Very template-driven all the way.
Overall	★★★★

MP3 PLAYER SOFTWARE (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 38)



Winamp

Price	Free
Contact	www.winamp.com
What's good?	The best you can get. Intuitive point and click interface, and it's free.
What's bad?	Not much, when all is said and done. Doesn't look quite as nice as Sonique on first glance.
Overall	★★★★



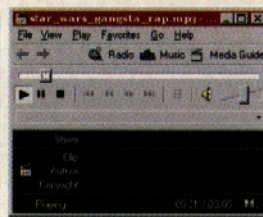
MP3 Box

Price	Free
Contact	www.zdnet.co.uk
What's good?	Stripped down MP3 playing.
What's bad?	Rubbish. Doesn't seem to work. Doesn't even look nice.
Overall	★★



MusicMatch JukeBox 4

Price	\$29.99
Contact	www.musicmatch.com
What's good?	Works as an integrated musical system for your PC.
What's bad?	You actually have to pay money if you want the full version.
Overall	★★★



Windows Media Player

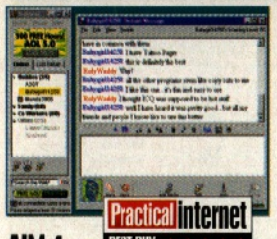
Price	Free
Contact	www.microsoft.com
What's good?	It plays all kinds of formats and is simple and easy to use.
What's bad?	Doesn't look great. Quite basic features.
Overall	★★★



Sonique

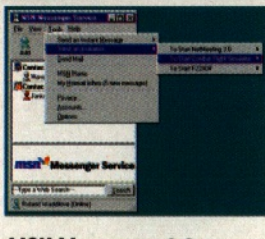
Price	Free
Contact	www.sonique.com
What's good?	Looks beautiful. Plays just about any kind of sound format. Skinnable.
What's bad?	A bit on the buggy side.
Overall	★★★★

INSTANT MESSENGERS (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 42)



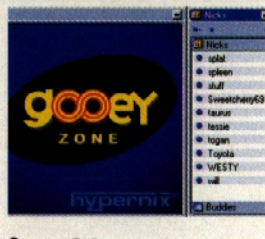
AIM 4

Price	Free
Contact	www.aol.com
What's good?	Well-designed, lots of features, easy to use, lots of users.
What's bad?	No public chat facilities, communities or telephone conferencing.
Overall	★★★★



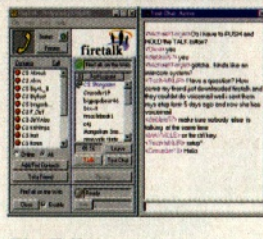
MSN Messenger 2.2

Price	Free
Contact	www.msn.co.uk
What's good?	Very simple to use for novices, monitors your Hotmail inbox.
What's bad?	An outdated program that offers fewer features than competitors.
Overall	★★



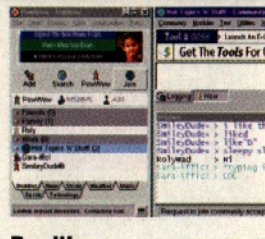
Goovey 2.1

Price	Free
Contact	www.goovey.com
What's good?	Every Web site is a potential chat room.
What's bad?	No control over the content of the chat. Very biased towards the US.
Overall	★★★★



Fire Talk

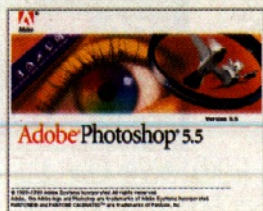
Price	Free
Contact	www.firetalk.com
What's good?	Telephone conferencing for up to 100 people, lots of forums.
What's bad?	Visually unexciting, needs a better user interface, no file transfer.
Overall	★★★★



PowWow

Price	Free
Contact	www.tribal.com
What's good?	Lots of communities to join, interesting text to speech engine.
What's bad?	Strong US bias for news content.
Overall	★★★★

GRAPHICS PACKAGES



Adobe PhotoShop 5.5

Price
£480

Contact
020 8606 4000 www.adobe.co.uk

What's good?
The greatest graphics program on the go, bar none. Unparalleled level of features.

What's bad?
Very, very expensive. Doesn't do much more for the beginner than other packages.

Overall ★★★★★



Photo Objects 50,000

Price
£59.99

Contact
01256 707767 www.hemera.com

What's good?
Brilliant collection of photographs, all vector-based, so you can blow them up to any size.

What's bad?
For sixty quid, what else do you want?

Overall ★★★★★



Fireworks 3

Price
\$179 + VAT

Contact
020 8358 5857 www.macromedia.com

What's good?
A bit tasty at helping you make animated GIFs for menus and general Web site niceness.

What's bad?
Again, a tad on the pricey side. Quite overpowering for the beginner.

Overall ★★★★★



Jasc PaintShop Pro 6

Price
£79.95

Contact
01295 258335 www.digitalworkshop.co.uk

What's good?
Cheap, user-friendly and easy to use. A dream for those new to the world of graphics.

What's bad?
Unsurprisingly, doesn't offer the same depth of features as PhotoShop 5.5.

Overall ★★★★★



Adobe Illustrator 9

Price
£111

Contact
020 8606 4000 www.adobe.co.uk

What's good?
The vector graphics creation package of choice. Exceedingly powerful. Quite cheap.

What's bad?
Takes a good while to get the better of.

Overall ★★★★★

E-COMMERCE PACKAGES (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 41)



Shopcreator

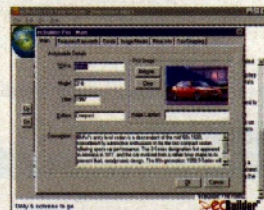
Price
£233.82

Contact
0845 1211400 www.shopcreator.co.uk

What's good?
Lots of features. Very easy to use.

What's bad?
It uses a Web-based system that is incredibly slow to use.

Overall ★★★



ecBuilder

Price
£125 + VAT

Contact
01628 587777 www.ecbuilder.co.uk

What's good?
An easy fill in the blanks approach, with lots of features and options.

What's bad?
No password protection on data files.

Overall ★★★★★



WebShop

Price
£468.83

Contact
020 7689 9797 www.cossax.com

What's good?
Lots of features. Assistants help you design the Web site.

What's bad?
Transparent backgrounds of GIFs altered and made ugly.

Overall ★★★★★



Shopping Cart Professional

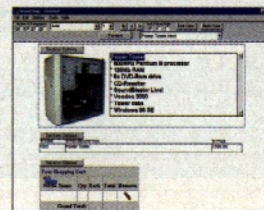
Price
£188

Contact
www.webgenie.com

What's good?
Can read in product lists and automatically create product lists.

What's bad?
Poor interface design, not very intuitive. Not for novices.

Overall ★★



VirtualShop

Price
£49.99

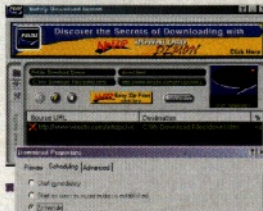
Contact
020 8677 4548 www.virtualshop.co.uk

What's good?
Very cheap and reasonably easy to use. Good for small business.

What's bad?
Limited features, no stock control, colour, size options and so on.

Overall ★★★

DOWNLOAD MANAGERS (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 43)



NetZip Download Demon

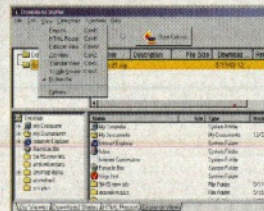
Price
\$29.99

Contact
www.netzip.com/products/info_demo.html

What's good?
More than enough features to be getting on with. Sexy interface.

What's bad?
Not as good as GoZilla. Prone to odd glitches. Close, but no cigar.

Overall ★★★★★



Download Butler

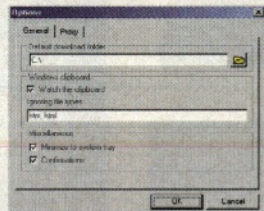
Price
\$29.99

Contact
www.lincolnbeach.com/butler.asp

What's good?
A whole load of unique features. Very easy to set up.

What's bad?
Complex and poorly designed.

Overall ★



Mass Downloader

Price
Free

Contact
www.gocities.com/siliconvalley/vista/2865/md

What's good?
It's simple to use and significantly speeds up your downloads.

What's bad?
Features are thin on the ground and the user interface is not very 'friendly'.

Overall ★★★★★



GoZilla

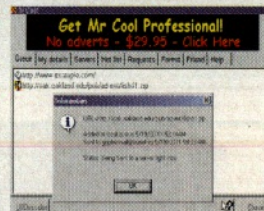
Price
Free

Contact
www.gozilla.com

What's good?
A truly wonderful free download manager that outperforms costly programs by a country mile.

What's bad?
Doesn't speed up your download time.

Overall ★★★★★



Mr Cool

Price
Free

Contact
www.netseers.com/mrcool

What's good?
An interesting idea that should make the download process more bearable.

What's bad?
Appalling interface, difficult to use. We couldn't get it to work.

Overall ★★

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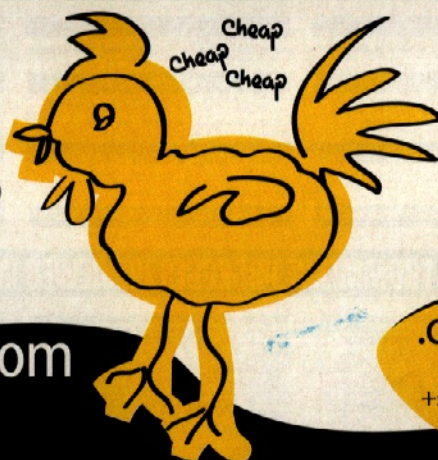
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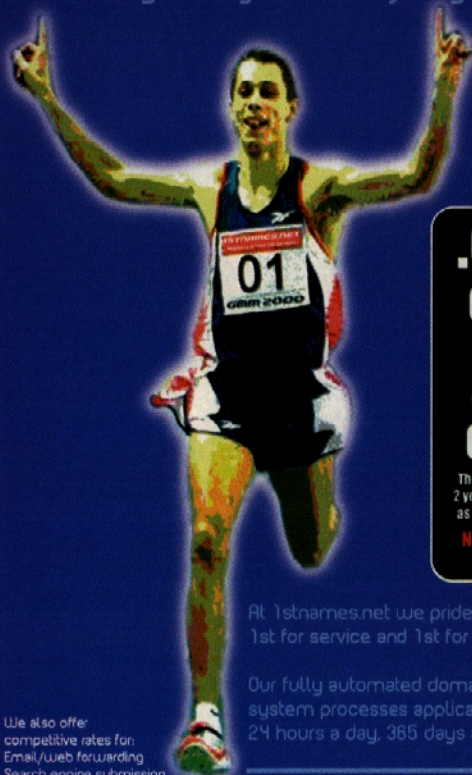
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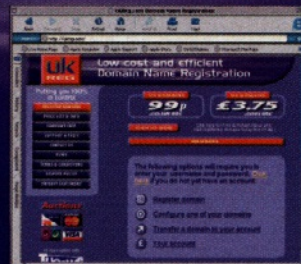
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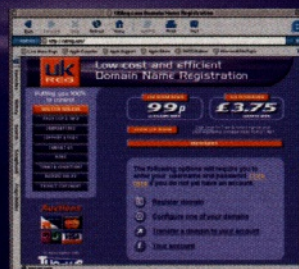
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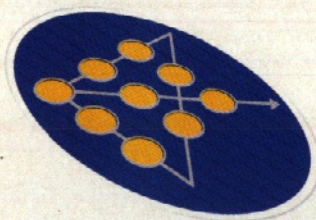
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ADDICTED TO THE INTERNET

FERGUS SHEPPARD WONDERS IF WE ARE CHAINED TO THE NET

While many office workers deeply resent the hours they spend lashed to a computer at work, popular psychology has returned to the strange syndrome of people who voluntarily choose to gaze into a PC monitor for breathtaking amounts of time.

The condition is dubbed Net Addiction – an ailment that has forced popular psychologists to analyse it at length on daytime

radio shows. The screaming question 'Am I a Net addict?' of course demands a simple self-diagnostic questionnaire. If you thought you enjoyed hypochondria before, now there are even more symptom boxes for you to tick.

Edinburgh psychologist Dr Keith Ashcroft said he thought a small minority of Net surfers could be engaging in "excessive usage" of up to 400 minutes a day – or just over six and a half hours. Dr Ashcroft adds: "It's a

very real problem with very real symptoms – quite similar to gamblers. If they (addicts) can't keep checking their email or surfing the Web, then they start getting edgy and irritable."

Now, as one who earns a living from the Web, I must stand aside at this point. My online colleagues grew weak with laughter at the thought that nearly seven hours of Net use constitutes a crazed addiction. They clock up the kind of hours usually worked by junior doctors cruising the Web. My

fellow Web professionals suggest the feelings of being edgy and irritable stem more from the fear of unemployment in a .com slump, and email is the essential beehive hum of where your next job is coming from.

Best of all, Dr Ashcroft warns that lurking Net addicts searching for love could meet potential partners with the same personality disorders. Personally, meeting someone with the same dysfunctional traits was a timesaving dating service I could well have used while single.

So I must remain the George Best of online use until someone finds a cure. Anyway, the Net has brought me amusement, knowledge, income, and ruinous phone bills. As online dates go, the Web and me is a mismatch made in heaven.

Fergus Sheppard is Online Editor for the ITN Web site, part of ITN New Media. For the latest multimedia news, visit the ITN site at www.itn.co.uk.

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